# Picturing Venus in the Renaissance print

# PICTURING VENUS IN THE RENAISSANCE PRINT

*The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,*
*Burnt on the water. The poop was beaten gold,*
*Purple the sails, and so perfumèd that*
*The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,*
*Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made*
*The water which they beat to follow faster,*
*As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,*
*It beggar'd all description: she did lie*
*In her pavilion – cloth of gold, of tissue –*
*O'er-picturing that Venus where we see*
*The fancy outwork nature.*

Shakespeare, Antony and Cleopatra II, ii, 191–201

# PICTURING VENUS IN THE RENAISSANCE PRINT

PETER BLACK AND GENEVIEVE WARWICK

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*Frontispiece*: Marcantonio Raimondi, *Crouching Venus c.*1509, cat. 7

*Front cover:* Attributed to Jan Muller, *Venus and Cupid*, *c.*1588–1600, cat. 10, detail

*Back cover:* William Hogarth, *Analysis of Beauty Plate Plate I*, 1752, cat. 16

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## FOREWORD

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Master of the Die
*Venus Wounded by the thorns of a Rose*, 1532, cat. 5

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Fig. 1 Marble head of Venus seen through a drawing grid, frontispiece to John Evelyn's *Sculptura*, 1769, University of Glasgow, Library, Special Collections

# RENAISSANCE PRINTS IN THE HUNTERIAN COLLECTIONS

GENEVIEVE WARWICK AND PETER BLACK

Among the varied holdings that made up William Hunter's great bequest to the University of Glasgow in 1783 was the nucleus of the future Hunterian Art Gallery's collection of prints and early illustrated books, which ranks among the most significant collections of Old Master prints in the UK. Hunter's collection, typical of his times, was encyclopaedic in scope, comprising objects of both art and science. He and his agents scoured Europe in search of collectibles, among them prints and early illustrated books. These early printed images served as models for artists in the Royal Academy, where Hunter taught, as well as forming part of his library. In these respects their place within Hunter's collection likely mirrored their earlier uses in Renaissance collections, in the artist's studio and in private libraries, as collectibles and as works of art to be sure, but also as sources of visual information.[1] In the 1940s the Hunterian's Renaissance collections were greatly enriched by the bequests of James McCallum and William Scott. The latter formed a remarkable collection of prints by Marcantonio and followers, including a number in this exhibition.

In this latter regard print collections formed part of the newly intensified circulation of knowledge that Johannes Gutenberg's mid-fifteenth-century invention of the printing press engendered. The advent of printing, coupled with an increasingly plentiful supply of paper, brought with it the mechanically reproducible image in company with the printed book. Highly portable prints and illustrated printed books circulated around Europe in ever greater numbers throughout the Renaissance, greatly hastening the communication of new discoveries and information to increasingly larger audiences.[2]

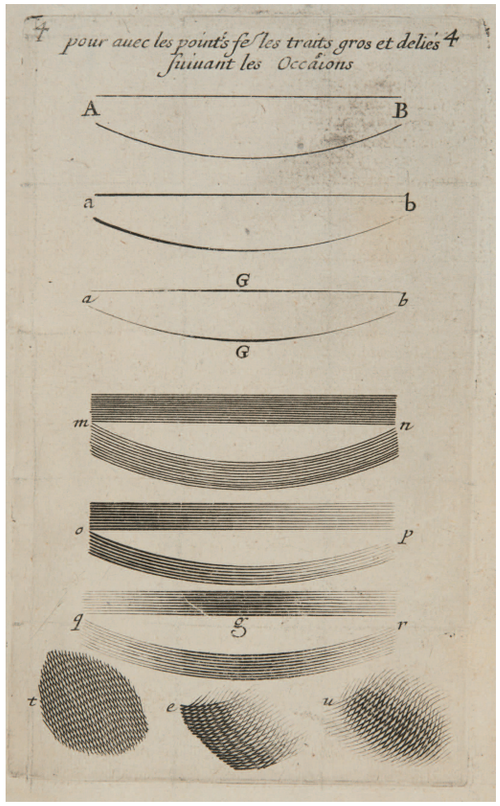
The history of printing, and the quickening circulation of knowledge that it enabled, is often seen as fundamental to the cultural development of the period we term 'Renaissance'. The definition of the term rests on the idea of a rebirth, and specifically a revivified interest in classical learning, the cultural legacy of the ancient past. Thus the invention of printing occurred alongside the discovery of many of what would become Europe's

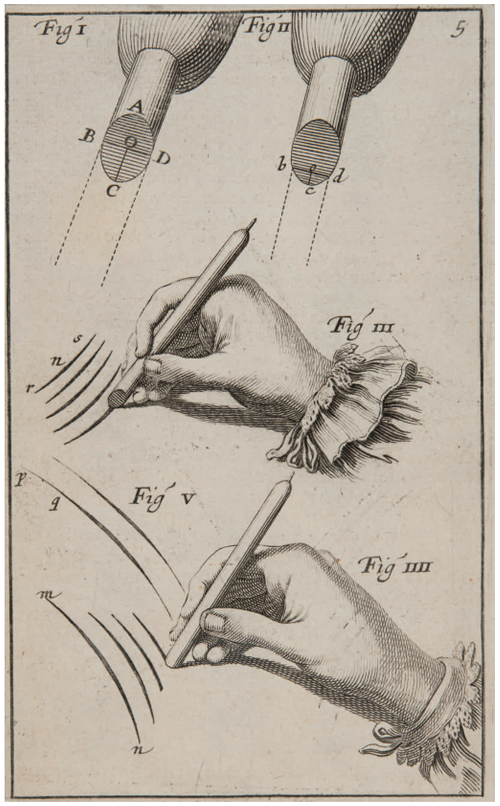

most celebrated antique sculptures. Each discovery was celebrated and generated great interest, with artists converging on each new find in order to draw after it, and subsequently to make prints, which could then be circulated broadly. Prints after ancient sculpture were the visual element of this great transfer of culture from antiquity into early modern Europe.[3] Thus the print emerged as part of a broader Renaissance cultural concern with the translation and publication of classical Greek and Roman texts into modern languages. Indeed, such prints after other works of art have been termed '*stampe di traduzione*', that is, 'works of translation' in the visual realm.[4] In Adam von Bartsch's great compendium of Old Master prints, *Le Peintre Graveur* (1803), the introduction opens with the claim that 'The print made by an engraver after a design by a painter can be compared perfectly to a text translated into a language different from that of the author…'.[5] With the invention of the mechanically reproducible image, prints on highly-portable paper after the great antiquities of Rome could circulate across Europe for the first time. Such prints after the antique became readily available in artists' studios, academies, and scholarly libraries all over Europe, and knowledge of these works was no longer confined to those who had themselves travelled to Rome.

This ability of the print to circulate all forms of visual knowledge was quickly taken up by Renaissance artists as a means to augment the fame and renown of their work, too. The most celebrated instance of this was surely the great collaboration between Raphael and the engraver Marcantonio Raimondi. Raimondi's prints after both Raphael,

and antique statuary, are well represented in this selection (cat. 4, 7, 8, 17), and typically lead major collections in print cabinets everywhere (fig 2). In the first biography of Raimondi by the Renaissance art historian Giorgio Vasari, Marcantonio's arrival in Rome quickly brought him into the orbit of both Raphael, and antiquity, for he immediately began to make prints after both.[6] Through networks of carefully laid engraved marks with an intricate cross-hatching of lines that trace the form in a sculptural manner, Raimondi may be said to have 'translated' the forms of monumental sculpture, into small works on paper in an exclusively linear, black and white medium. The level of conceptualisation involved in such artistic 'translation' is indeed high, requiring the engraver to reckon with the three-dimensionality of sculpture on a two-dimensional surface, the effective rendition of the fall of light and shadow across sculpture to indicate volume in a flat and linear medium, as well as the reduction in scale to small sheets of paper.

Much of the allure of the Renaissance print lies in the skill and artistry with which such a high degree of visual 'translation' is effected. Renaissance culture was deeply permeated by classical concepts of *imitatio* as the foundation of artistic invention, and within which its understanding of the nature of the 'reproductive' art print was conceived. In this regard, the Aristotelian critical appreciation of forms of imitation able to give a resemblance despite great disparities of medium were surely formative of the Renaissance reception of the capacity of the print to render the effects of painting and sculpture through the lines of the engraver's burin.[7]




Figs. 3–4 Abraham Bosse's *Traicté des manières de graver en taille-douce* of 1645. University of Glasgow, Library, Department of Special Collections

Early treatises on the art of engraving were consequently largely concerned with the technical means by which to describe the qualities of painting and sculpture in their exclusively linear and colourless medium. Abraham Bosse's *Traicté des manières de graver en taille-douce* of 1645 illustrated the point with printed details of the engraver's cross-hatched lines on paper to convey the illusion of tone and volume as the focus of his critical commentary (figs. 3–4).

The print's diffusion of knowledge of ancient sculpture both as a model for imitation in the artist's studio, and as a means to classical learning in the scholar's library, made it a key instrument in a Renaissance codifi-

(*opposite*) Fig. 2 Title page created by John Barnard (1707–84) for his collection of prints by Marcantonio Raimondi, engraving with pen inscription by Barnard, The Hunterian, GLAHA 7162, from Scott's collection.

cation of the 'classic' out of the historical legacy of the past. The circulation of prints after antique statuary served to heighten and intensify the aura of greatness attached to these ancient works. If the mechanically reproducible image has, in the modern era, been criticised as diminishing the cultural status of the original work of art, it has rightly been argued that the revolution in image reproduction effected by Johannes Gutenberg in fifteenth-century Germany had precisely the opposite effect.[8] In tandem with the Renaissance publication of ancient texts, the newly-minted art print served to extend and deepen an early modern knowledge of Europe's antique legacy and thereby to form a canon of exemplary works from the ancient past with a pervasive and ongoing resonance into the future. In an artistic culture predicated on imitation, this constitution of a canon of most celebrated antique examples disseminated across Europe by means of prints played an instrumental role in the formation of Renaissance art. Famed examples of ancient sculpture became the accepted models for Renaissance art's figural types, and were readily available through this culture's chief medium of reproduction, the print. Thus works such as the Laöcoon and the 'Apollo Belvedere' became leading models for the Renaissance artist in the rendition of the male figure as heroic, while the ideal female form in Renaissance art drew above all on antique representations of the ancient goddess of love and so of beauty, comprising Venus and an array of other females in her image – Flora, Helen of Troy, Diana and her nymphs, and so on.

This exhibition of Renaissance prints of Venus from the Hunterian Art Gallery illustrates the wide range of typologies of her form in both antique sculpture and Renaissance art. Seated, crouching, bathing, or standing in a series of recognised poses established in antiquity, she is shown adorned by jewels, elaborate braiding of the hair, or rich textiles, and set into decorated interiors or landscapes of flowers and animals that augment and complement her identity as the paragon of beauty. As the idealised embodiment of beauty in the female nude, and so of love and desire, Venus ineluctably became the emblem of art itself. The selection of prints represents her various aspects. The first section explores the representation of Venus in Renaissance art as the figuration of ideal beauty in order to denote the beauty of art. The second section turns to the practice of copying after antique statuary, and specifically Venus, in the nascent art academies of the Renaissance. It points to the great longevity of this conception of artistic education in closing with William Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty Plate I*. In this representation of an eighteenth-century sculptor's yard, like the sixteenth-century Tribuna of the Uffizi gallery, a Venus sculpture stands at the centre of the composition. Her readily-identifiable pose was intended to signal a figure of great artistic beauty, and to act as the exemplar of ideal beauty in artistic instruction, which it did until the late nineteenth-century redefinition of art itself. The final section considers the role of imitation in Renaissance art with specific reference to the figure of Venus as the prototype of the ideal female nude.

## NOTES

1 On the history of the Renaissance print and its collection see especially: Bury, 2001; Landau & Parshall, 1994; Griffiths, 1996; Lincoln, 2000; Baker, Elam & Warwick, 2003; Pon, 2004; Zorach & Rodini, 2005; Gregory, 2012. See, Bartsch, (1803) 1920. Early sources on prints include: Vasari's life of Raimondi (1568) 1966; Bosse, 1645 & 1649; Evelyn, 1662; Baldinucci, 1686. On the role of prints in visual communication see the classic by Ivins, 1953.

2 From the large literature in this field see, in particular, Eisenstein, 1983; and the Gutenberg exhibition, 2000.

3 Haskell & Penny, 1981; Bober and Rubinstein, (1986) 2010; Barkan, 1999. See also Bann, 1989.

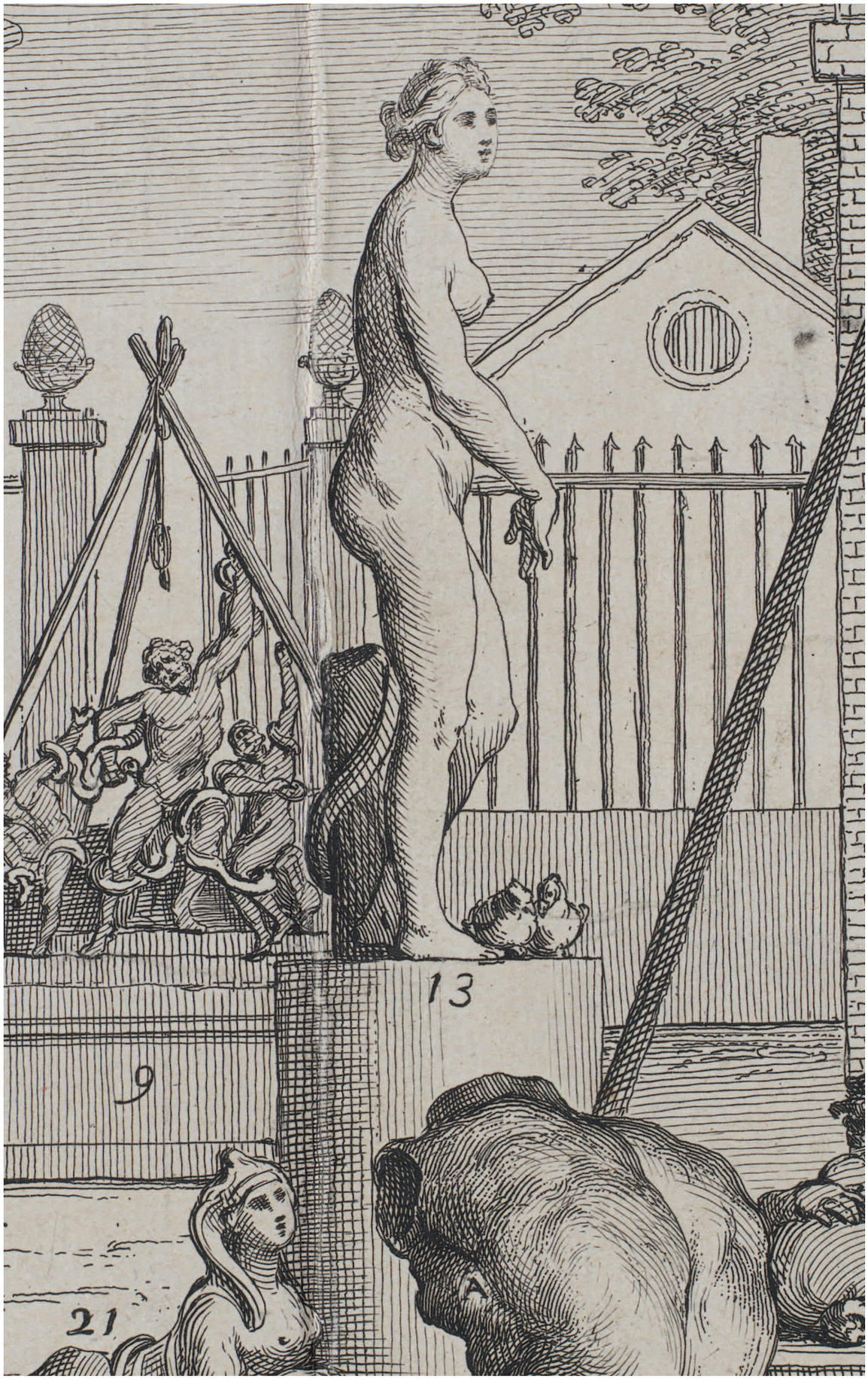
4 Argan, 1967; Borea, 1979. This discussion is bound up with a critique of the category of reproductive print that Bartsch espoused. More recent scholarship has questioned the aptness of the category of the 'reproductive' print, and the category of 'reproductive' art or the art of the copy more generally, on which see especially Pon, 2004. See also de Grazia, 1996.

5 Bartsch, (1803) 1920, Vol I, iii

6 Vasari, (1568), 1966.

7 From Aristotle's *Poetics*. See the classic studies in literature by Greene, 1982; Quint, 1983; McLaughlin, 1995

8 See the classic essay by Benjamin, 1936, on the mechanical reproduction of works of art in modernism, and a critique from the perspective of the Renaissance by Hughes, 1997. See also Bann, 2001.




William Hogarth, *Analysis of Beauty Plate 1*, 1752 (cat. 16 detail)

# RECOLLECTING VENUS

GENEVIEVE WARWICK

*Muse, sing the deeds of golden Aphrodite*
*Who wakens with her smile the lulled delight*
*Of sweet desire*

'Homer's Hymn to Venus', P.B. Shelley, 1818

In the early formation of the Uffizi galleries as the intended repository of the great Medici art holdings it was, as in other princely collections of the period, the ancient sculptures that took precedence. Thus the top floor of this new Medici palace, built in the 1560s by the Florentine art historian, painter and architect Giorgio Vasari, was given over to art. Rows of antique sculptures lined the corridors, then as now. This display of antique statuary was matched by growing Medici holdings in Renaissance paintings, and the early collection of works on paper that would become the Uffizi's future *Gabinetto* of prints and drawings.[1] Throughout the palace, newly commissioned fresco and stucco ornament adorned the ceilings above. As part of this concerted programme of interior decoration the court set designer and architect, Bernardo Buontalenti, began to orchestrate the interior space of the Uffizi palace's top floor during the 1580s, carving out the small but lavishly appointed octagonal room decorated with velvet and mother of pearl that would become known as the '*Tribuna*' (fig. 6). This was designed at the heart of the larger collection, a 'museum within a museum', to showcase star pieces of the Medici holdings on a changing basis, according to new acquisitions.

Quickly becoming the most famous

(*opposite*) Fig. 5 'Medici Venus', first century B.C., marble, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Fig. 6 Bernardo Buontalenti, Uffizi Tribuna, Florence, 1580s.

room in Europe as the model for choice and sumptuous princely display, the *Tribuna* was something of a Janus head historically. That is to say, it looked both to the future and to the past origins of princely collecting. If its earliest collections were still tied to medieval traditions of dynastic treasure, its later acquisitions made it a prototype of the early modern art gallery.[2] This historic shift was notable especially with the 1677 arrival of a cluster of antique sculptures from the Villa Medici in Rome. Out of this group of stellar pieces, the work that was destined to become the heart of the Tribuna was the so-called Medici Venus (fig. 5).[3]

The Medici Venus, like the *Tribuna*, was something of a time-traveller. While the precise date of her unearthing in Rome is not known, a reduced copy dating from 1559 was part of a princely gift to Philip II of Spain, providing a *terminus ante quem* for her discovery.[4] She appears with printed illustrations in François Perrier's 1638 catalogue of Rome's most beautiful sculptures as part of the collection of antiquities at the Villa Medici, her fame disseminated across Europe through her reproduction in print.[5] Following her removal to Florence in 1677, the Medici Venus and the other sculptures that accompanied her underwent a programme of restoration by Ercole Ferrata and it is at this time that she acquired the *seicento* arms she currently bears, for she had evidently been found with these limbs missing. It was also at this time that the Medici Grand Dukes began to catalogue their burgeoning collection of prints and drawings, undertaken by their curator and resident art historian, Filippo Baldinucci.

Today, we catalogue the 'Medici Venus' as a Hellenistic copy of a lost Greek fourth-century B.C. bronze, perhaps Athenian, and date it to the first century B.C. In so doing we consign it to the vexed connoisseurial category of a Roman 'copy' after a classical Greek work.[6] Throughout the early modern period, however, and into the eighteenth century it was regarded as a masterpiece of Greek classical sculpture and the finest example of its type. The base then given to it as original to the piece, later disputed, bears a signature inscription to the Greek Cleomenes, son of Apollodorus of Athens, though some such as the German art historian Joachim von Sandrart (1680) linked it to the greater sculptor Phidias. Eighteenth-century critics even gave it to Praxiteles, to whom classical sources attributed the most exalted sculpted Venus of all, the lost Venus of Cnidos.[7] The fame of the Medici Venus, and that of her surroundings, was magnificently celebrated in Johan Zoffany's 1772 painting of connoisseurs visiting the Uffizi 'Tribuna' for Queen Charlotte, testimony to the moment of her highest status as the summit of the Western classical tradition of art (fig. 7).[8]

The Uffizi *Tribuna* and its Venus marks the encounter between two strands of scholarly writing as they may pertain to a study of antique 'survivals' in Renaissance art such as are manifest in prints after antiquities.[9] The first of these is concerned with memory in its complex relation to objects and sites.[10] The second is concerned with issues of cultural translation in its temporal dimension, here brought to bear on the visual realm.[11] The question is thus bound up with the social formulation of the 'classic' as a figuration

marked by a high degree of translatability over time and place.[12] This is manifest not only in the great number of surviving sculpted and painted imitations of Venus in Renaissance art, but also in the multitude of plaster casts and prints after ancient typologies of Venus poses made throughout the Renaissance, as that culture's means for the greatest possible duplication and diffusion of its chosen images.[13]

The story of the Uffizi Tribuna, and its Venus, is something of a lodestone in this Renaissance history of Venus collecting. In the *Tribuna* the Medici Venus kept company with two other ancient sculpted Venus marbles exemplifying variations of her poses, a *Venus Victrix* and a *Venus Urania*, while the paintings on the surrounding walls would include Titian's great *Venus of Urbino* (1538, fig. 8), and Annibale Carracci's *Venus with a Satyr and Cupids* (1588, acquired 1620, fig. 9). Early modern princely collections typically juxtaposed antique statuary with Renaissance painting to display the tenets of a comparison, or *paragone*, between 'ancients' and 'moderns', sculpture and painting. As at the *Tribuna*, Venus was a common motif. Throughout the Uffizi collections more generally, there were Venus antiquities in a variety of poses, mirrored by Renaissance paintings of her form, as well as drawings and prints after her, so spanning the spectrum of ancient and early modern figurations of this goddess, like a gallery of Venus types – Anadyomene, Callypigian, Felix, Pudica, Urania, Victrix, seated or crouching, or at the bath.[14]

In her earlier collocation at the Villa Medici, too, the Medici Venus stood among an array of Venuses in myriad poses.[15]

Fig. 7 Johan Zoffany, *The Tribuna of the Uffizi*, 1772–8, oil on canvas, Royal Collection, Windsor.

Indeed, Venus was among the most prolific of antiquities.[16] Across the early modern period she spawned a plethora of imitations and adaptations in Renaissance painting, as at the *Tribuna*, as well as in a multitude of copies and adaptations in all media and sizes, in marble and bronze, as garden and fountain ornaments, as decorative miniatures, as plaster casts and as prints. Imitations after her sculpted form thus touched on an illustrious history of Venus on display, of Venus multiplied and compared: ancient/modern, painted/printed or cast/carved. To represent this figure of ancient sculpture within Renaissance art was therefore to lay claim to a 'doubled' art of translation, across time and across medium. Renaissance intellectual culture defined itself by the translation of ancient texts, as well as images and objects,

Fig. 8 Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, oil on canvas, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

for which the vehicle of this great cultural transfer was the newfound invention of printing.[17] If Renaissance painting sought to translate the canons of ancient sculptural beauty into the application of coloured pigments to a two-dimensional surface, the print performed a further act of transposition in rendering the illusion of painting's colours as well as sculpture's modulations through a network of engraved lines on paper, as the earliest treatises on the art of the print took care to describe.[18] Moreover, these so-called reproductive works founded in the imitation of the past refer the viewer beyond the specificities of their particular manifestation to a history of art structured by the transmission of figural form from one epoch to another, from antiquity to its 'renaissance'.[19] As an archetype of beauty, Venus speaks to the ideals of this classicism. Her history of translation across time and medium, the sheer number of 'copies' after her both within antiquity and the Renaissance, is testament to her enduring cultural thrall.

The Medici Venus, in particular, was among the most copied of ancient sculptures throughout the long Renaissance.[20] Her pose and gesture circulated in a variety of media taken after her form. Artists' studios typically amassed collections of prints, drawings and casts after the most cited antiquities, of which the 'Medici Venus' was one, and which we witness in prints of artists' academies where she frequently appears as the exemplification of an idealised female beauty. Within the studio these were used as models in the conception of new works of art, and as a means of training for students and apprentices to develop their visual judgement by imitating these canonical pieces. Paintings, prints and drawings of such studio activity often depict the act of copying after a cast. A series of well-known prints representing the artist's studio as an academy for painters and sculptors, that by Agostino Veneziano of the Florentine sculptor Baccio Bandinelli's Academy for drawing at the Belvedere courtyard of antiquities in Rome (cat. 12), by Battista di Parma of 'The practitioners of the visual arts' based on the Florentine Accademia del Disegno established by Vasari (cat. 13), and by Pier-Francesco Alberti of 'The Painter's Academy' after the Accademia di S Luca for artists in Rome (cat. 14), show novice artists at work. In each they have available a series of models, or exemplars, from which to learn by copying, including models from nature but also, crucially, plaster casts or smaller figurines after

Fig. 9 Annibale Carracci, *Venus with a Satyr and Cupids*, *c.*1588, oil on canvas, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

starred antiquities. Venus, in the pose of the 'Medici Venus', is chief among them, and this remains the case in eighteenth-century representations of artistic training in the imitation of an ideal beauty, as in Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty Plate I* (cat. 16).[21] It was also true in connoisseurial collections as in Zoffany's rendition of the '*Tribuna*', where casts are displayed on shelves to serve the purposes of a nascent comparative art history.[22]

Hence both in the *Tribuna* and through her many simulacra, the Medici Venus held sway over art collections and over artists' visual memories. As Krzysztof Pomian has argued, and as Zoffany's great painting illustrates, the Medici Venus as the goddess of love and beauty was also an embodiment of the viewing relation between art and the art-lover.[23] Life size, she is raised on a pedestal so that viewers approach her in an attitude of devotion due to a goddess, or like courtiers to a beloved. This Venus stands frontally to the viewer, fully nude, in a *contrapposto* pose. A dolphin plays at her feet to indicate her origins from the sea. Her sculptural surfaces are modelled with imperceptibly gradual transitions to engender diffused light reflections that suggest the softness of skin. Her flesh swells gently at the stomach and the breasts, while the nipples are worked with a more open tooling. As the lover/viewer, we gaze upon this goddess, yet Venus looks away. Possessed of a dreamlike interiority she apparently reflects upon herself. Our gaze follows hers into the distance, as if to look back on the illustrious history of her own representation as the touchstone of beauty, love, and art. Her artistic representation in Renaissance art, in imitation of a typology of classical prototypes and poses that played on her nudity, embodied a confluence of 'art' with female beauty and desire. In the words of the seventeenth-century Roman art critic, G.P. Bellori, in his elaboration of the classical ideal in art, 'the ancient goddess Venus departed from the gardens of Cythera to dwell in the hardness of marble, her thrall echoing through her sculptural imitations that captured the tremulous beauty of the female nude'.[24]

Renaissance figurations of Venus thus drew together the long 'crossed history' of her ancient representation in art and literature. As the goddess of love and beauty her figure

was closely tied to that of poetry, for love unrequited was the poet's perennial theme. This theme finds its most potent expression in the poetry of Petrarch, in his fused longing for the woman Laura as for a lost age of antiquity, and in Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, that literary dream of love's strife sublimated in the visual pleasures of the sculptures of the ancient gods. Literary manifestations of Venus likewise expressly invoked a further realm of *paragone* that compared painting to poetry. Derived from Horace's simile of *'ut pictura poesis'* – as in poetry so in painting – this 'coming together' of words and images was central both to the art criticism of antiquity and to a Renaissance theory of art, as well as its structuring of a nascent art history.[25] The mythopoetic traditions of the ancients, the literary loves of the gods, were coupled with their antique artistic embodiments in sculpture and in paint. This synaesthesia of words, objects, and images latent in the cultural memory of artists and viewers heightened and intensified each new manifestation within its historical series. New works might be said to embody within them the echoes and reverberations of the history of that form's representation, like a series of reflecting mirrors extending back through time. To render Venus was thus to recollect her past. Each successive Venus was infused, imbued with, the verses of the classical poets as well as the ancient sculptor's forms. If Renaissance Venuses recall directly the history of her antique renditions in sculpture, and specifically the unfolding representations of the Medici Venus, this history of objects is always interposed with those of a classical mythopoetics. Those who viewed such work saw it through shared memories of this conjoined historical legacy, its affective force strengthened by its serial imitation. These graceful Venuses recollected the manifold histories of their namesake, echoing the enduring power of her form.

## *Marbled Beauty*

Among a spectrum of ancient Venus 'types' distinguished by their pose and gestural language, the 'Medici Venus' is classified as a 'Venus pudica' – a Venus of modesty. This title singles out her pose as distinctive: the gentle crouch of the torso, the head that turns away, and above all the position of the left hand that 'covers' her sex in an apparent gesture of modesty. In the 'Medici Venus' the right hand is similarly raised to 'cover' the breasts, although this is Ercole Ferrata's seventeenth-century restoration of a missing limb. The possible significance of the gesture of the left hand pointing to the female sex within its ancient cultic origins is now lost. In archaic sculpture it surely served to reference Venus's earliest manifestations as a fertility goddess. Its later designation as modesty is thus deeply ambivalent. Perpetuated in this figuration was an ancient and anthropological conflation of woman with sex, and with its veiling, for the gesture served to signal this cultural crucible of feminine identity as much as to cover it.[26] This gesture and the serial history of its repetition embodies in itself a constructed narrative of Venus as the source of beauty in art.

This confluence of the history of art and the female nude had an apparent point of origin, in a lost sculpture. Lost already in

antiquity, Praxiteles's figure of Venus for her temple on the island of Cnidos nonetheless cast the deepest shadow across the history of her enduring representation. Roman marble copies were many, as the 'Medici Venus' makes manifest. In his *Natural History*, the ancient writer Pliny the Elder constructed the history of the Cnidian Venus as a coming together of two art-historical epiphanies that mark the birth of what we now term the classical age of ancient art: the invention of the monumental female nude as a typology of Venus, distinct from her archaic representation; and the introduction of a visceral 'naturalism' in art, with all its fleshly surface pleasures, to a visual culture previously marked by the austerity of ideal form. The eighteenth-century art historian, J.J. Winckelmann, recounted this historic transformation of art through the metaphor of Juno donning Venus's girdle in order to seduce Jupiter.[27] Previously confined to the realm of the symbol, Venus/art became seeming flesh, alluring and seductive. This capacity to infuse stone with the semblance of life was joined to a narrative of the sculpture's making: that Praxiteles worked under the sway of Venus himself, in love with his model the courtesan Phryne. His newfound ability to imbue marble with the quivering semblance of life captured *au vif* was born of the artist's desire. Pliny related the translation of these visual effects into a parallel history of affective bodily response. Her marbled yet pulsing form so moved men that they approached her as would-be lovers, or dashed themselves onto the rocks beneath her sanctuary in unrequited despair. Lucian related his encounter with this marble as a temporal narrative of viewing movement marked by moments of arrested sight. Like Pliny, Lucian celebrated its presence as sculpture 'in the round' to be viewed from all sides, facilitated by its central display. Lucian further elaborated on the two entrances to the shrine which gave a primary view onto the sculpture either from the front or behind. 'As the doors were opened… the goddess's beauty seized us.'[28] He described the viewer as visually arrested, his progress halted, just as the artist had 'seized' the semblance of life, capturing the loveliness of flesh to immortalise it in stone.

All subsequent manifestations of the Cnidian form were shot through with the memory of Praxiteles's lost work, charged with the stories both of the rolling sexuality she engendered; and her power to halt, to arrest: both to quicken, and to still. Both in turn draw on archaic histories and anthropologies of primitive belief as the source of ancient myth adumbrated in James Frazer's 1890 *Golden Bough*, of early Venus worship as a mimetic charm to vouchsafe the fecundity of the coming harvest, appeased also by ritual offerings to this goddess. Though lost from conscious memory this primitive violence haunted the stories of the ancient gods, as in the story of Venus's love for Adonis, who was destined to be gored to death. This legacy of classical myth that shaped the disciplinary origins of theoretical anthropology likewise formed the cultural backbone to Sigmund Freud's contemporaneous psychoanalytic project, similarly steeped in a knowledge of ancient mythology.[29] It is in this sense that we may understand the multiplication of Venus as serial displacements of desire, chains of replication arching across time. Hence the

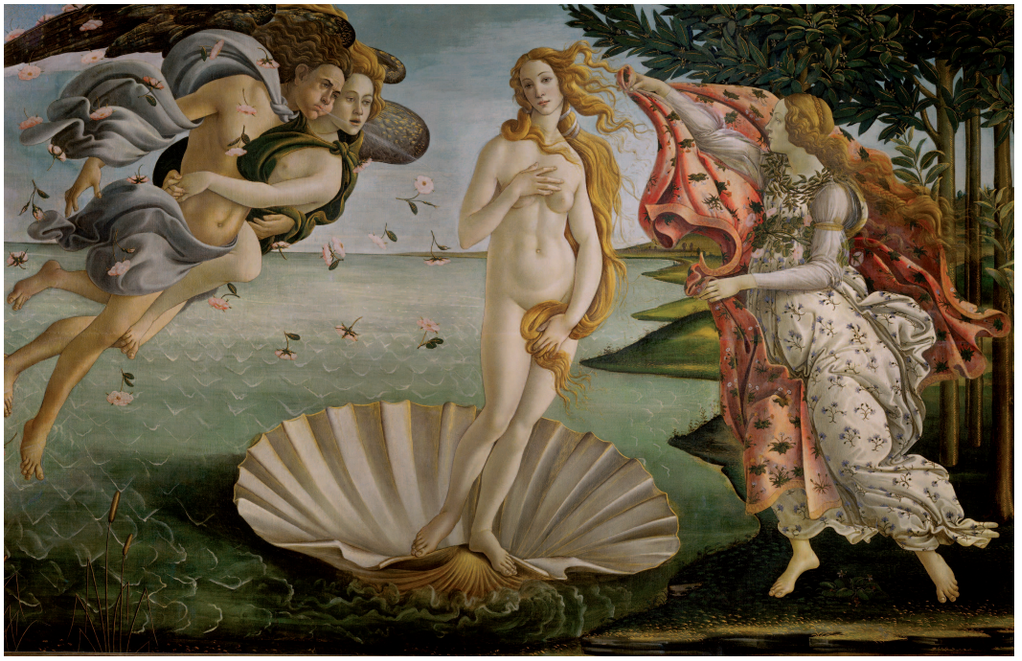


Fig. 10 Sandro Botticelli, *The Birth of Venus*, *c.*1486, tempera on panel, Uffizi Gallery Florence.

potent paradox of her enduring form, insistently repeated: of a quivering sexuality yet frozen into cold stone, of a Venus who looks away. In this she incarnated the tropes of Renaissance love poetry, bound to the pursuit of a beloved always beyond reach. Thus Poliphilo's dream of securing Polia mingled together the love of a woman with his pleasure in the lost beauty of antique stones, just as Petrarch longed for the perpetually elusive Laura/Venus in keeping with his desire to re-enter the world of the ancients. Lucian had described the Cnidia as bearing 'a look of proud contempt' – removed, unobtainable, ever beyond possession, signifying that lost loved thing reified in the story of the lost Cnidia, and in psychoanalysis, of a woman at once venereal and marmoreal, and always absent. When the seventeenth-century art critic Bellori wrote his discourse on the immortality of ideal form, he illustrated this with a print of a reclining Venus type, and included in his discussion of ideal female beauty the story of Helen of Troy, a woman so beautiful as to have 'launched a thousand ships'. We remember that Helen was Venus's gift to Paris for choosing her in a competition of beauty, making of Helen a Venus substitute. In Bellori's reworking of her story he concluded that the power of Helen's beauty so transcended the merely mortal she was in fact a sculpture. Bellori's 'petrification' of the woman drew on Euripides' description of Helen as a statuary double made of impalpable cloud, termed *'agalma'*, meaning in Greek a delight in the effigy, understood as a displacement for that ineffable lost object of human desire. In this sense we may understand art history's insistent repetition of Venus as seeking endlessly to make present

what is lost, so casting desire along its path of infinite substitutes.[30] To place a Cnidian Venus at the centre of an art collection, as at the Uffizi's Tribuna, was tacit acknowledgement of the art viewer constructed as art lover, to displace Pliny's strange story of the stain of passion on the surface of the Cnidian Venus into the aestheticised figure of the art amateur.[31] To paint Venus, and to replicate her form in the multiple medium of print, was to summon forth not only her incomparable marbled beauty as the model of art but also her enduring fecundity as art's muse.

## *Venus Reflections*

Archaic myths of origin relate that Venus was born of the sea, conceived of a congress between the water and the floating semen of a castrated Uranus. Accounts of her cult, celebrated above all in spring, describe ritual bathing in the sea, as also for Neptune. It was on such an occasion that both the ancient sculptor Praxiteles and the painter Apelles apparently witnessed Phryne disrobe and loosen her hair to bathe, leading both artists to depict her as a Venus rising from the sea. Apelles painted her as a 'Venus Anadyomene', therein launching a Venus motif as fecund as that of the 'Pudica'. In her setting at Cnidos, Praxiteles's Venus apparently stood in a sanctuary high on a hillside terrace overlooking the sea, so drawing these associations of Venus with sea-bathing together through a physical proximity. This was the mythical origin of the long history of her depiction in painting as a female nude of unsurpassed beauty emerging from the waters, famously and variously recalled by artists such as Botticelli and Titian (fig. 10 and fig. 11). The 'Pudica', and the 'Urania', too, carry longstanding associations with the bath. Venus sculptures frequently comprised a vase for water, a shell, or the dolphin that accompanies the 'Medici Venus', to suggest her imminent emergence from the sea, their undulating curves echoing the contours of her form. The history of display for both the 'Pudica' and a 'Crouching Venus' type was often that of fountain sculpture, referencing the water of her doubled origin both as a goddess and as a work of art. Here the viewer might see her form reflected in the water from every angle. It was this possibility of in-the-round viewing that Pliny had praised in the open sanctuary built for the Cnidia. Lucian echoed it in his description of two entrances to her temple, doubling the encounter with the goddess's form as that from the front, and from the rear.[32] It finds expression, too, in the depiction of the Judgement of Paris, that beauty competition between Venus, Juno and Minerva that Paris was to judge in favour of Venus (Victrix) with fateful consequences for Troy (cat. 17). The theme of the beauty competition led painters, and so printmakers, to portray a series of female nudes in varying poses like a succession of views of a sculptural form seen from different angles: front, side and rear

Fig. 11 Titian, *Venus Anadyomene*, *c.*1520, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Scotland Edinburgh.

Fig. 12 Titian, *The Toilet of Venus* or *Venus with a Mirror*, *c.*1555, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Andrew W Mellon Collection.

(cat. 18). These representations on a two-dimensional surface may be said to echo the view of a sculpted Venus reflected in a surrounding pool of water, proliferating her image to produce a multitude of mirrored Venuses. As with accounts of Narcissus as a statue gazing into a pool at his own reflection, these ancient sources may be read as one of *paragone* between sculpture and painting.[33] The resulting 'reflection-painting' cast in the waters could, unlike sculpture, show each Venus from only one side at a time, but in supplement it could show the surrounding sky, cloud, landscape, garden, or architecture, or a room of rich textiles and decorative objects such as vases and mirrors, or with additional representation of her love child, Cupid. This allowed the painter/printmaker to elaborate the beauty of Venus in comparison with that of painted gardens, flowers, and landscapes, or playing cupids, as ornament to her femininity. Moreover it suggested the possibility of an infinite succession of views of Venus in tandem with the viewer's movement around the piece.

The concept of Venus reflected constituted a further attribute of her myriad typologies, crystallising in representations of the Toilet of Venus in which she gazes into a mirror at herself.[34] Here she is painting as *mise-en-abyme*, the image within the image so beloved of early modern viewers in which her mirrored reflection became a further 'painting' inset within its larger receptor-work (fig. 12 and fig. 13). The mirror, as Leonardo da Vinci had argued, embodied the art of painting both as a metaphor and as a means. In the great comparison or '*paragone*' between painting and sculpture debated across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Leonardo who championed painting defined his art as like a mirror, understanding illusion as both the measure and the end of art. If this debate famously engaged artists to contribute in writing, they also attended to it repeatedly in their works of art. Through his mimetic skill the painter could render all the forms, textures and colours of the world.[35] This is manifest also in prints of Venus, which commonly adorn her form with an array of other beauties in the form of textiles, jewels, elaborate braiding of the hair, flowers, or a garden, or even a distant view onto a landscape. Thus the two-dimensional surface could, through art, magically project the illusion of space, volume, depth and projection, as well as the myriad textures of a world of objects and surfaces. Over the course of the sixteenth century the mirror became a common workshop tool because of its capacity to translate the third dimension of forms and space into two-dimensionality, which the painter might then render onto canvas through the grid of a squaring device as Albrecht Dürer showed in his woodcut of an artist tracing the form of a monumental reclining 'Pudica' (fig. 14).[36] In this way the mirror reflection became the painter's means of pictorialising the model. Thus painters and, with an even greater inten-

sity, printmakers of the High Renaissance worked with an understanding of art as a dialectic, split between the mirror of painting and the marbled forms of antique sculpture they imitated. Their art of imitation was therefore always doubled, its forms predicated on the echoing reverberations of antique sculptures caught in the web of the squaring device, in the reflective surface of the painting's pool or mirror, illusion rendered through the juxtaposition of pigments or the printmaker's network of graven lines.

Like Leonardo, the great Venetian artist, Titian, also claimed for painting Venus's mirroring pool. For the Spanish king, Philip II, he undertook a series of mythological works beginning with a representation of Venus and Adonis (cat. 19). This Venus would keep company with a painting of Danaë (fig. 15) depicting the young princess seduced by the god Jupiter. Danaë showed a female nude reclining seen from a three-quarter frontal view, in the tradition that Giorgione and the young Titian had inaugurated with their *Sleeping Venus* (fig. 17). In the *Sleeping Venus* they repeated the covering gesture of the antique 'Pudica' over her sex while transposing this sculptural citation onto a recumbent, sleeping nude set in a painted landscape, which Titian would later recall in a domestic interior in his *Venus of Urbino* destined for the Uffizi Tribuna (fig. 8). *Danaë* repeats the motif of the reclining nude with the intimation that her left hand indexes her sex like the 'Pudica', yet varying it to depict a woman in the thrall of Jupiter's coming. In a letter to Philip II, the artist explained the theme of these two works as a meditated variation: 'And as the Danaë I have already sent to Your Majesty was seen entirely from the front, I wanted to vary in this other *poesia* and show the figure from the opposite side.'[37]

In this letter Titian brought the many threads of the *paragone* debate to bear upon his mythological paintings for Spain. By terming the *Venus and Adonis* a *poesia* he referenced his understanding of painting as a 'mute poetry' charged with the *ekphrases* of the ancient writers.[38] In keeping with the polysemy of the ancient myths, repeated and imitated in myriad literary manifestations, in his paintings too Titian chose to repeat and to vary, to cite and to translate. The variation to which he draws the king's eye is that of the different poses of the female nudes. The king, like Jupiter, may view the soft swell of Danaë's abdomen and breasts from a frontal view; and the arched yearning of Venus's outline from behind. Together the two paintings afford the binary viewing points of Lucian's Cnidia, from the front and from the rear. They are like the reflections of Venus statuary captured in pooled water, the liquid ripples and ribbons of colour rendered by the mottled impasto and veiling glazes of Titian's brush. The Venetian art critic and Titian's friend, Ludovico Dolce, described Venus depicted from the back, soliciting the viewer to imagine the view of the front that the painting withholds:

Fig. 13 Peter Paul Rubens, *Toilet of Venus, c.*1606–11, oil on canvas, Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum Madrid.

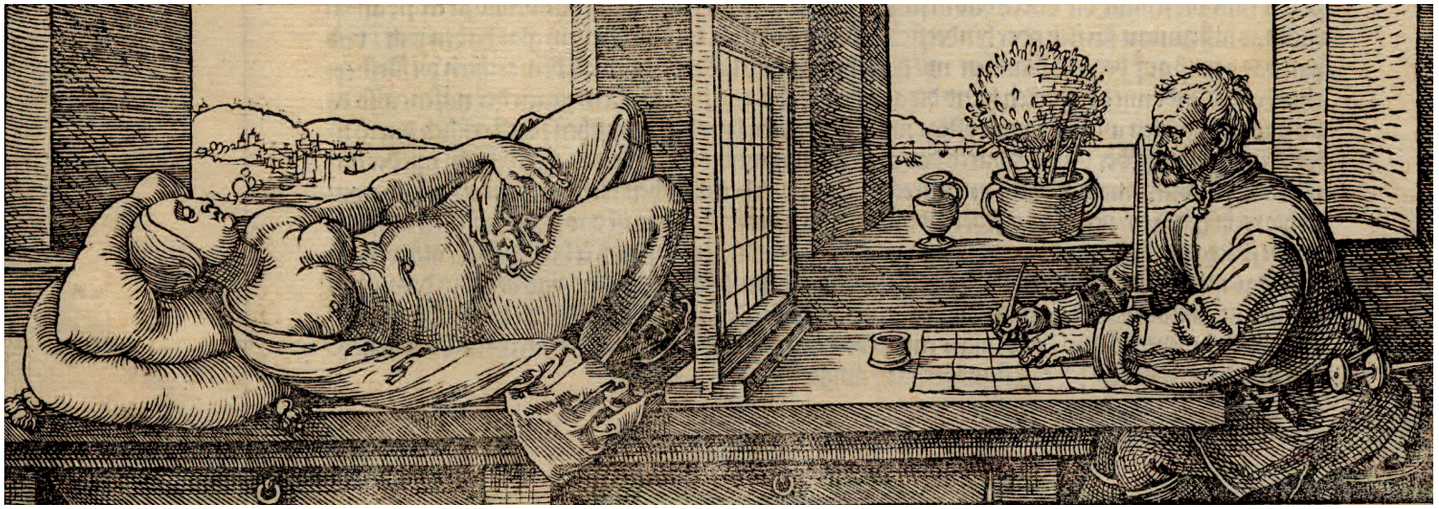
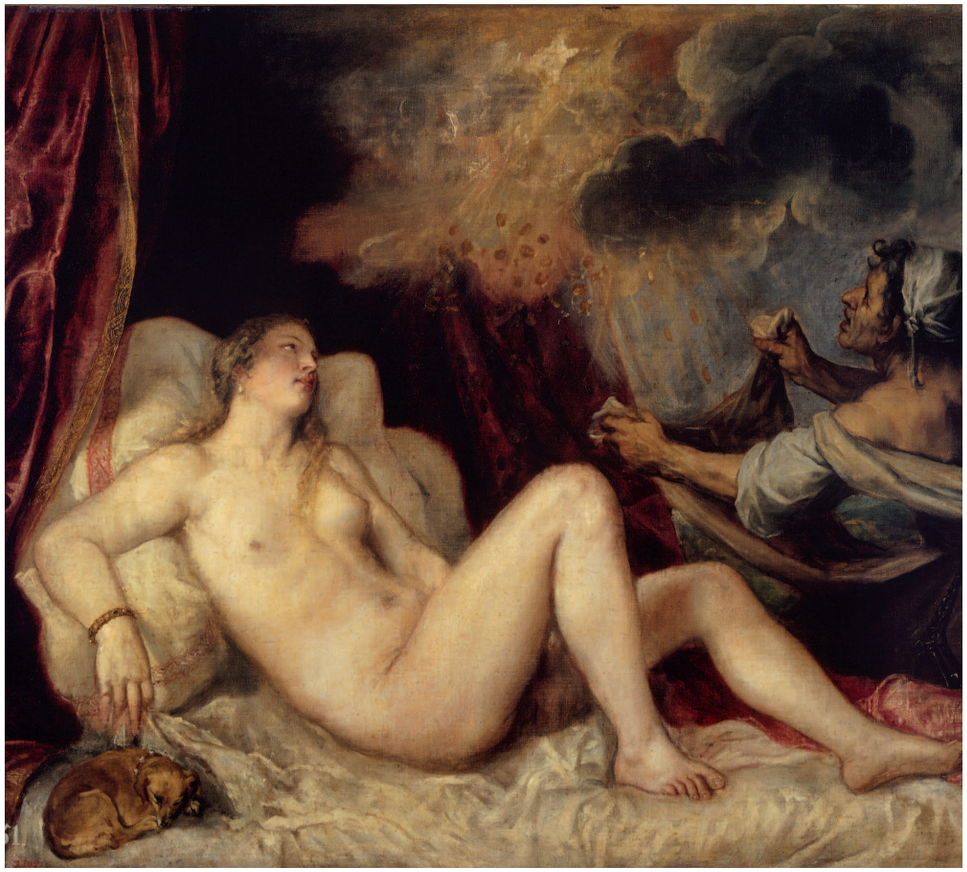
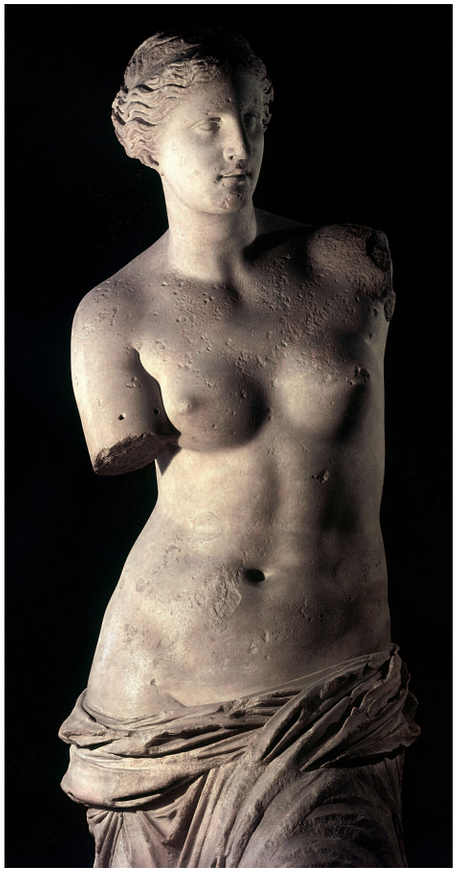


Fig. 14 Albrecht Dürer, *Painter drawing after a recumbent figure*, woodcut from *Unterweysung der Messung* (*The Painter's Manual of Measurement*), 1525. British Museum.

> …not for lack of art… but to display a doubled art…. Because in turning her face towards Adonis… she demonstrates in every way certain sweet and lively sentiments, and such that they cannot be seen… there is no man so keen in sight or judgment, that seeing does not believe her alive; nor anyone made so cold by the years, or so hardened in his being, who does not feel a warming, a softening, a stirring of the blood in his veins. Nor is it any wonder; for if a marble statue could, with the shafts of its beauty so penetrate the marrow of a youth that he left his stain there, then what should this figure do, which is of flesh, which is beauty itself, which seems to breathe?[39]

Through Titian's Venus, Dolce recalled Pliny's account of the Cnidia, the echo of this ancient text's recollection of Praxiteles's sculpture working through the painting to sound again in Dolce's description. The text simultaneously engages with the critical topos of lifelikeness which formed part of the legacy of Praxiteles's art. Bleeding into the early modern *paragone* between painting and sculpture, ancients and moderns, and as echoed in prints, the passage also touches on a sixteenth-century critical comparison between Michelangelo and Titian. Michelangelo's art was seen to rival the ancients in his ideal sculptural forms; but Titian relieved painting of the unyielding, chiselled anatomies of this *maniera statuina* – sculptural manner – to clothe his bodies in quivering flesh. Through his glistening pigments and loaded strokes Titian overturned Michelangelo's adamantine figures to position his visceral bodies as Praxiteles's true heirs. Here it is signal that Titian completed his *Venus and Adonis* for Philip II while in Rome in 1545, an occasion that afforded the opportunity of close comparison between these two great paradigms of style. And it was just the following year that Benedetto Varchi launched the *paragone* debate proper, with his canvasing letter to a number of artists, including Michelangelo, asking for their opinion on the relative merits of the two arts.[40]





(*left*) Fig. 15 Titian, *Danaë*, 1553–4, oil on canvas, Prado Museum Madrid.

(*right*) Fig. 16 'Venus de Milo', 100–130 B.C., marble, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

## *Venus Fragments*

Before Ercole Ferrata's restoration of the 'Medici Venus', her form was, like many ancient sculptures, fractured and fragmented, with missing limbs. At the time of her discovery she was recuperated in pieces, her limbs broken and her right arm missing. In this, too, she was tied to a broader Renaissance encounter with ancient sculpture as a ruin, known in its parts. For our historical knowledge of ancient Venus statuary is predicated not only on a lost Cnidia possessed of a beauty so potent as to stir an abandoned desire, but also of a body known to us in fragments. In most instances the losses were far greater than those of the 'Medici Venus', and we know her serial bodies only through those disembodied heads, torsos, or limbs that have survived.[41] We also know her history as one crossed by violence. Like Bellori's sculpted Helen of Troy, the 'Medici Venus' was seized by Napoleon for the French in 1803.[42] The historic uncovering of the 'Venus de Milo' (fig. 16) by a Greek peasant tilling the soil in 1820 equally brought French and Greek forces near to armed struggle over her marbled body on the beach of Melos.[43] She

(*top*) Fig. 17 Giorgione/Titian, *Sleeping Venus*, *c.*1510, oil on canvas, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden.

(*bottom*) Fig. 18 Raphael, *The Triumph of Galatea*, *c.*1514, fresco, Villa Farnesina Rome.

too was found in pieces, her full restoration prevented by the permanent loss of both arms. Thus we know this Venus in her parts, in their presence and their absence.

This historic fragmentation of Venus's body into severed pieces was reified throughout the Renaissance by the proliferating production of plaster casts after her various parts. Heads, busts, armless bodies, these circulated as an economy of material citations, deployed in artists' studios as models of perfect yet mutilated beauty. This in turn was reproduced in prints, to serve as instruction and exemplar in the further imitation of her ideal form. The predilection for these fragments mirrored classical literary conventions of love poetry that described the body of the beloved in pieces, in an erotics of ellipses. Ovid recounted the delights of his mistress nude before him, both as a whole body and as a series of modularised parts – arms, breasts, legs – relating their pleasures 'one by one'.[44] The metonymic process is reified in the story of Zeuxis and the Maidens of Croton, in which the ancient artist proposed to imitate only the most beautiful part of each of a series of women in his art, so engendering the classical conception of artistic process as a process of idealisation. The same structure of ellipsis runs through Petrarchan love poetry, in which the beauty of the beloved is celebrated as a series of beautiful parts – lips, eyes, hair – and in Renaissance court treatises on the beauty of woman.[45] This propensity to fragment the ideal female body was matched by a parallel reparative drive to make whole. In those early modern restorations such as that of the 'Medici Venus', that carved new limbs to replace those lost over time, this culminated in an effective reinvention of the work according to the prevailing conception about the lost parts, in this instance in the long, tapering figures of her indexing hands. Thus Venus exercised her thrall both in her parts and in their imagined reintegration. Just as the female nude was seen as a composition of beautiful parts, so viewers and artists were practised in using her parts as a means of re-envisioning her whole.[46] This was, in fact, the foundation of an artistic practice based on an integration of discrete parts that Bellori, like Raphael before him as he painted his *Galatea*, had termed *idea* (fig. 18).[47]

This oscillation in the viewing of Venus as parts, and as a re-imagined whole, parallels the mutable act of apprehending the Cnidia that Lucian described. As he and his companions rushed forward eagerly to see the Venus they crossed the island of Cnidos surrounding her sanctuary to find it filled with couples celebrating her cult. If their movement towards the goddess was impetuous,

the sight of her halted their motion, slowing their pleasure. In turn urgent and arresting they viewed her through a metaphor of the act of love. We may also assimilate the artistic act of imitation bound to a love of statues into this metaphor of oscillation. Praxiteles 'caught' the semblance of life in stone, so petrifying Phryne's visceral body. The Renaissance painter drew on a memory of the petrified forms of ancient marbles, quickening them with the semblance of life like Pygmalion, through the colour of pigment, the flickering modulations of paint. Urging/arresting, quickening/petrifying, their pendular motion recalls anthropological time marked by the succession of the seasons that ancient myth told through the story of Persephone, split between Pluto's underworld and her mother Ceres's fertilisation of the spring. The story of Venus and Adonis, too, was one of love cut by violence, the blood issuing from his now-marbled corpse, absent of colour, sowing the brilliant red of the anemone's flower (fig. 19). The myths of Venus and the thrall of her representation turned on her libidinal sway as goddess of desire, muse of art. If Cupid emblematises her fertility, his arrows also signal the cut of love's wounds. Adonis lies gored, Venus known through her sundered pieces like the inevitable shattering of desire and its repeating register of loss. From this enduring lost thing issue the sublimations of art. Venus proliferates as the infinitely multiplying effect of her sign, serially reparative as well as shattered, alternately breaking and redoubling her arts of desire. Her chain of *semblables* across the history of ancient and Renaissance art makes manifest the enduring significance of the art of 'copies' as well as the moments of meditated variation on her form that we regard as art-historical epiphanies. Across the swathes of Roman marble 'copies' after the lost Greek Cnidia, to the many medial translations of Renaissance imitation, in drawing and painting to be sure but also in the arts of multiple reproduction such as miniature bronzes, monumental plaster casts, and the graven lines of the printmaker's burin, the ancient figure of Venus remained archetypal to the forms of Renaissance art as the embodiment of beauty, and so of art itself.

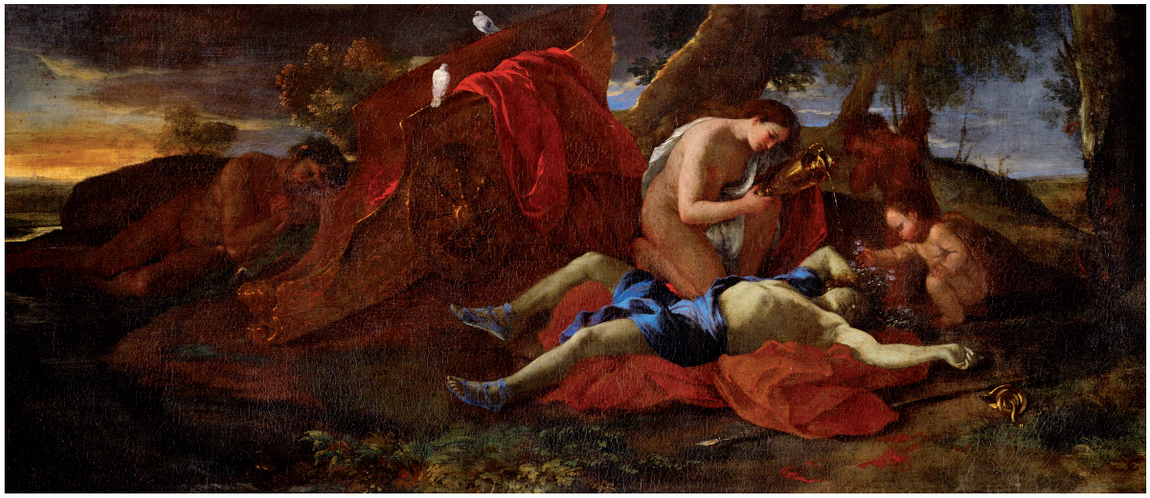


Fig. 19 Nicolas Poussin, *The Death of Adonis*, *c.*1625, oil on canvas, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Caen.

## NOTES

1 On the origins of the Uffizi gallery collections see Petrioli Tofani, 2000; Barocchi & Ragioneri, 1983; and *Gli Uffizi. Storia e collezione*, 1983.

2 On the origins of the *Tribuna*, see Petrioli Tofani, 2000, especially pp. 7–22, 175–92. On changing acquisitions in the *Tribuna* and thus display as traced through successive inventories of the Medici collections see Bertelà, 1997. See also the discussion of the Tribuna in Haskell & Penny, 1981, 53–61.

3 On the Medici Venus see Mansuelli, 1956–61, I, 69–74.

4 See Scholten and Binnebeke, 2003, on van Tetrode, an artist who executed a cabinet of choice reductions of Roman antiquities, commissioned by Nicolo Orsini, Count of Pitigliano, as a gift to Philip II (never sent).

5 Perrier, 1638, plates 81–3.

6 As per Mansuelli, I, 71–3. But see also the literature that takes up the category of copy to critique this view, especially Preciado, 1989; and Elsner & Trimble, 2006.

7 Sandrart,1680, 16. See the catalogue description in Haskell & Penny, 1981, 325–8.

8 On Zoffany's painting see Webster, 2011, 281–302. On Greek sculpture as an enduring paradigm of 'beauty' see Settis, 2008.

9 See the classic studies by Seznec, 1956; Warburg, 1999 & 2000. See also Didi-Huberman, 2002; and the collection of essays edited by Settis, 1984–86.

10 See especially Nora, 1975–1992.

11 On issues of cultural translation in the Renaissance and early modern periods see especially Blair & Grafton, 1990; Burke and & Po-Chia Hsia, 2007; and Pratt, 1991. See also Flood, 2009, with reference to art. On the cultural aspects of translation see Eco, 2003. On the question of temporalities in art see Nagel & Wood, 2010. With reference to sculpture see Hughes & Ranfft, eds., 1997.

12 See especially Fried,1986; Settis, 2006; and Griffiths, Most, Settis, 2010.

13 On the Renaissance print see especially Landau & Parshall, 1994; and Bury, 2007. On the issue of prints as 'copies' see Pon, 2004; and Witcombe, 2004. Major sources on the Renaissance art print include Vasari's life of Raimondi, 1966; Bosse, 1645; Baldinucci, 1686; Evelyn, 1662. On the history of the production of plaster casts in the Renaissance see the classic study by Haskell and Penny, 1981, especially pp. 1–7, 16–22, 31–42, 79–92, of which the section on 'Plaster Casts and Prints, 16–22, is particularly relevant here.

14 On the Uffizi collections see note 1. For a typology of Venus poses in ancient statuary known in the Renaissance see the indispensable catalogue by Bober & Rubinstein, 2010, 63–69.

15 The 1598 inventory of the Villa lists an array of Venuses, Boyer, 1929, nos. 32, 111, 308, 261–267.

16 On the artistic representation of Venus see Didi-Huberman, 1999; Arscott & Scott, 2000; Baumstark, 2001; Mai, 2001.

17 On imitation in Renaissance literature see especially Greene, 1982; Quint, 1983; McLaughlin, 1995. On the Renaissance history of printing see the classic McLuhan, 1962.

18 As discussed by Bosse, 1645.

19 See the classic essay by Panofsky, 1944 & 1960; Barkan, 1999; and Nagel & Wood, 2010.

20 On early modern interest in the collection of antiquities see Haskell & Penny, 1981, and the catalogue entry on the Medici Venus, no. 88, 325–328. From the vast literature on the relationship of the Renaissance with the classical heritage Barkan, 1999, is particularly relevant here.

21 On the collection of plaster casts in the 17th century artist's studio see Scholten, 2008.

22 This is also true in seventeenth-century Flemish paintings of galleries or cabinets, such as those of Willem van Haecht, where collections of plaster casts are often represented in the background of sumptuous painting collections.

23 Pomian, 1982.

24 Bellori, 2005, 62.

25 The classic statement is Lessing, 1984; and Lee, 1940.

26 See Havelock, 1995; Paolucci, 2003, 20–39; Salomon, 1996.

27 Winckelmann, 1766, I, 32. On Winckelmann's art history see Potts, 1994. On the relationship between beauty and desire in ancient art see Boymel Kampen, 1996.

28 For the ancient sources on the Venus of Cnidos see Pollitt, 1990, 84–89. See the more recent discussions of the textual and physical evidence in Stewart,1997, 97–99. See also Neer, 2010.

29 See Kuspitt, 1989. See the fundamental study by Damisch, 1996, for an analysis of the relationship between desire and the perception of beauty within the terms of Freud's psychoanalytic project.

30 Bellori, 2005, 57–62. Stoichita, 2008, 82–6, discusses the passage and the reference in Euripides. See Damisch's extensive discussion of the Judgement of Paris in relation to the aesthetic and desire, 1996.

31 Pomian, 1982.

32 Pollitt, 1990, 84–89, 158–163; Havelock, 1995, 80–83, 22 86–93.

33 Elsner, 1996.

34 See Stewart, 1996.

35 On Leonardo and the *paragone* see Farago, 1991. On the metaphor of painting as a mirror see Arasse, 1984. For a discussion of relationships between painting and sculpture in early modern European art theory see Lichtenstein, 2003.

36 This appeared as an illustration to Dürer's technical treatise for artists on measurements and proportions of 1525. On artists' use of mirrors see Arasse, 1984. On the use of squaring devices with reference to Venus see Pardo, 1997.

37 Fabbro,1977, 158. See Rona Goffen's discussion of Titian's Venus paintings in general, and of the poesie paintings, 1997; and the exhibition catalogues, *Tiziano Vecellio: Amor Sacro e Amor Profano*, 1995; and Calabrese, 2003; and Goffen, 1997. On Titian's work for the Spanish court see especially Checa, 1994. See also the catalogues of the Venice-Washington

exhibition, *Titian: Prince of Painters*, 1990–1, especially the essays by Padoan and Hope; the London-Madrid exhibition Falomir, 2003; and of the recent exhibition in Rome by Villa, 2013.

38 Puttfarken, 2005.

39 In Roskill, 1968, 213.

40 Varchi published the replies to his questions on the *paragone* sent to Michelangelo among others in 1546, as well as his 1547 lecture on the subject, in 1549. Michelangelo famously replied that he judged painting better the more it approached relief, or sculpture. See Barocchi's edition of Varchi and Vincenzo Borghini's writings on the *paragone*, 1998. See also Quiviger, 1987; and *The genius of the sculptor in Michelangelo's Work*, 1992, especially Berti, 45–65.

41 See the discussion of fragments of antique sculpture in Barkan, 1999, 119–208.

42 Boyer, 1970, 187–92, 196.

43 Aicard, 1874.

44 Ovid, *Amores*, 1.5 .

45 See the fundamental articles by Cropper, 1976,1985, 1986. See also Ferguson, Quilligan, Vickers, 1986; Rogers, 1988; and Ames-Lewis & Rogers, 1998.

46 See Fuller, 1980, for an application of Klein's phantasised part-object to the currency of Venus parts; and the rereading by Arscott & Scott, 2000, 12–17

47 Raphael's 1514 letter to Castiglione on painting *Galatea* in Golzio, 1971, 31. See Bellori, 2005 ed., 55–67, for his elaboration of the *idea*.

Hendrik Goltzius
*Venus, Bacchus and Ceres*, 1595 (cat. 11, detail)

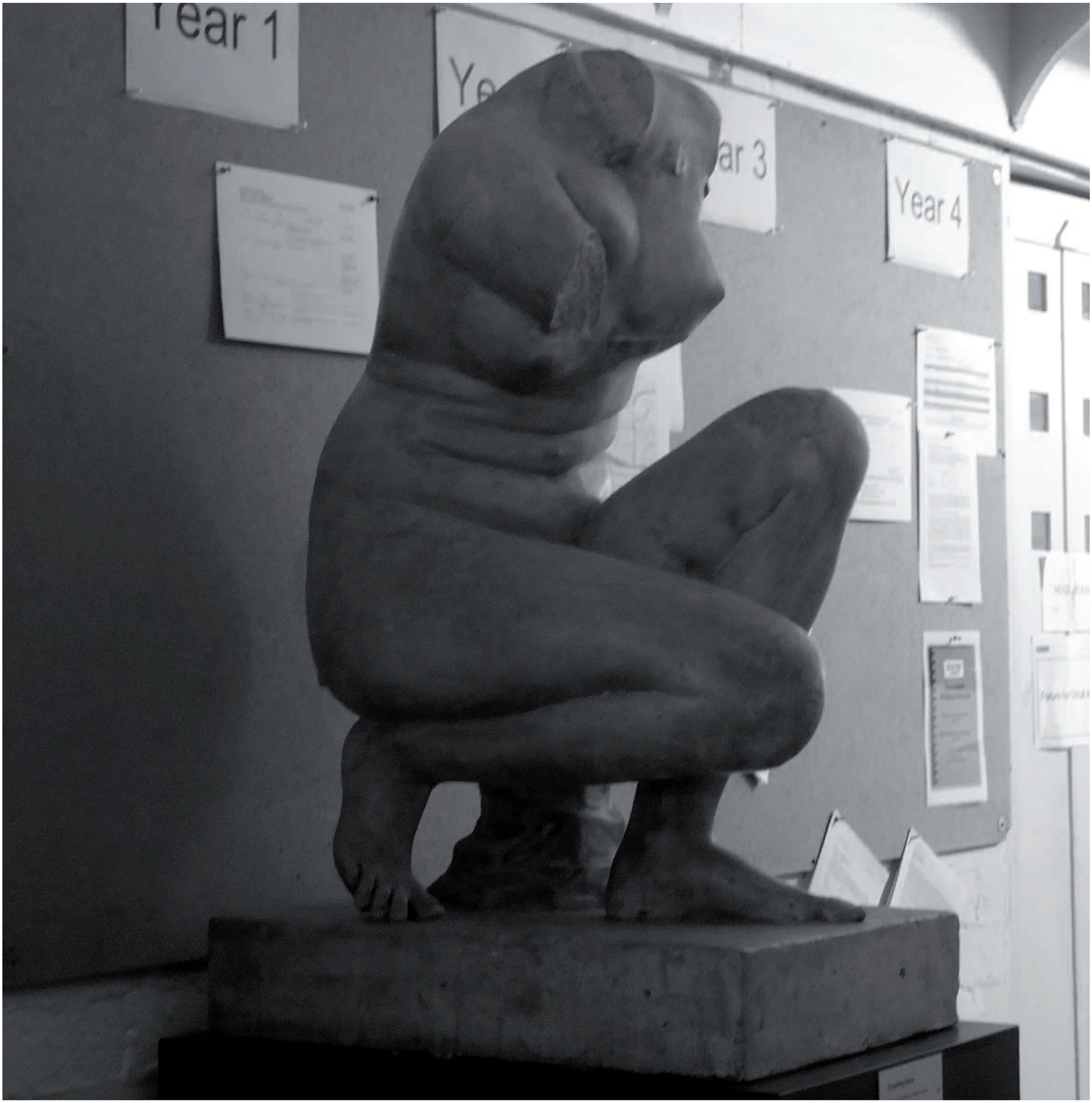
1

## Crouching Venus

Mid- 19th-century cast from a Roman marble copy of a Hellenistic sculpture of *c.*250 B.C.
Plaster
Lent by Glasgow School of Art

This cast has been part of an academy of the fine arts since the mid-nineteenth century. The Glasgow School of Art, established in 1845, has an impressive collection of casts of antique sculpture and architectural ornament which formed an important component of most early museums and art schools but have survived in remarkably few places. Glasgow's casts remain in the art school where they are accessible to fine art students as intended by the founders. They were created and sent up to Glasgow by the South Kensington Museum which formed a national centre of expertise in casting from antique sculpture. Glasgow followed the pattern set by earlier academies, in which it was necessary to show proficiency in 'drawing from the antique' before moving on to drawing from life or modelling.

The figure is cast from a Crouching Venus of the same type as that seen in Marcantonio's inventive engraving of *c.*1509 (7).



2

## Albrecht Dürer (Nuremberg 1471–1528)

*Adam and Eve, 1504*
engraving 24.8 x 19.1
Meder 1; Dodgson 39
GLAHA 3491
McCallum bequest, 1948

Dürer's earliest engravings revealed a strong admiration for the work of Martin Schongauer (*c.*1450–1491) of Colmar, who was the greatest German printmaker of the fifteenth century. In 1500 Dürer's outlook was changed by his meeting with an Italian engraver, Jacopo de' Barbari (*c.*1460–1516), who demonstrated the construction of the human figure using ideal proportions. In this virtuoso engraving, signed on a tablet in the ancient style, Dürer applied his newly acquired classical knowledge to the Bible story (Genesis 3), in which the serpent tempts Eve with an apple from the Tree of Knowledge. Dürer's rigid figures resemble marble sculptures of the ancient gods Apollo and Venus rather than naked flesh. Through such prints Dürer's influence spread throughout Europe. In Italy Dürer's prints were soon present in the collections of painters such as Raphael, and they were plundered for their thought and pictorial ideas, especially by engravers. His reputation is summed up by Giorgio Vasari, for whom he was '*pittor mirabilissimo et intagliatore di rame di belissimi stampe*' (an amazing painter and engraver on copper of the most beautiful prints). This engraving, which had an immediate impact on Italian printmaking, is original in applying an ideal, sculptural, beauty to the forms of Adam and Eve. This powerful artistic idea, that the first man and woman were divinely beautiful, since they were created by the hand of God, was followed immediately by others. Eventually it was passed on also by writers, notably Giampaolo Lomazzo (1538–1600), whose *Trattato dell'Arte della Pittura* (1584) has a chapter on the depiction of famous figures. He begins by mentioning a work strongly influenced by Dürer, Marcantonio's *Adam and Eve* (B. XIV.3.1): 'Et cominciando da Adamo & Eva non ho dubbio che la forma d'amendue non fusse bellissima, & sopra tutte l'altre leggiadra, per essere stati fattura della propria mano d'Iddio' (And beginning with Adam and Eve, I am certain that their forms were extremely beautiful, in fact more attractive than all others, since they were created by the very hand of God).

3

## Hans Baldung Grien

(Schwäbisch Gmünd 1484/5–1545 Strasbourg)

*Adam and Eve, 1519*

woodcut 26.3 x 10.6
Hollstein 2
GLAHA 120
McCallum bequest, 1948

Dürer led a productive workshop in Nuremberg in which many artists trained. In 1503 he was joined by Baldung, then aged 18, as a journeyman. He managed the workshop during his master's second visit to Italy, 1505–7. Baldung flourished as a painter and, unlike his master, did not develop as an engraver on copper, although his practice as designer of woodcuts shows that he did learn from Dürer the commercial value of printmaking to a painter running a workshop. A comparison between the two artists reveals the much greater extent of Dürer's assimilation of classical ideas from Italy. Baldung's woodcut is a more overtly erotic image than Dürer's *Adam and Eve* engraving. By banishing from his image the serpent of the Bible story (Genesis 3), Baldung turns the first woman into a sexual being who uses the forbidden fruit to achieve her own ends. Although the statuesque Eve has the body of the goddess Venus, Baldung's focus is on human psychology rather than ideal proportions.

4

## Marcantonio Raimondi

(Bologna *c.*1480–1527/34)

*Mars, Venus and Eros, 1508*

engraving 29.5 x 21.0
Bartsch XIV.257.345; 2nd state
GLAHA 241
McCallum bequest, 1948

It is not possible to construct a full biography of Marcantonio, who was the greatest Italian printmaker of the early sixteenth century. *Mars, Venus and Eros* is an early work, one of a small group that the artist signed with a monogram MAF (meaning Marco Antonio de' Franci, a reference to his master in Bologna, Francesco Francia) as well as the date. This places the work after Marcantonio's stay in Venice, in 1506, where he published prints copied from Dürer's *Life of the Virgin* series. This print also predates Marcantonio's move to Rome, in 1509 or 1510, where the classical inspiration of his work was further stimulated through collaboration with Raphael. Both technique and design of this very sculptural image follow Dürer closely, reflecting such works as the monumental *Hercules* of *c.*1498–9 (Holl. 63).

Past scholars assumed that Marcantonio here reproduced the design of another artist (possibly Mantegna), however, more recent work to establish a corpus of drawings by Marcantonio (Faietti and Oberhuber 1988) has revealed convincing evidence of his ability as an independent designer. The seated figure of Mars echoes the famous ancient marble sculpture, the 'Belvedere Torso', which inspired Michelangelo and was used by numerous artists after him as the starting point for a muscular seated male figure. This sculptural influence may have come via the *Battle of Cascina* cartoon in Florence, from which Marcantonio extracted a figure for an engraving made at about the same time.

The sculptural integrity of the figure group is very strong. Venus and Cupid stand in a conjoined pose which reflects a common Roman sculpture group. Nothing is known of Marcantonio's source for the figure of Venus, though some scholars have suggested that it derives from his Venetian experiences of c.1506, where he may have seen works by Tullio Lombardo (Faietti and Oberhuber, 1988, cat. 34). The goddess's torch, which is a symbol of her power to inflame mortals with love, was a late addition to the plate. Possibly it was an afterthought that makes sense of the interaction between Venus and Cupid. Mars reaches out, longing for her to turn to him. The meaning is clear: love can disarm even the god of war. An appropriate title for the print might be an ancient motto that was much repeated in the Renaissance: *Amor vincit omnia* (Love conquers all things).

5

## Master of the Die

(*fl. c.*1532–33)

*Venus Wounded by the Thorns of a Rose, 1532*
engraving 19.9 x 17
Bartsch XV.194.16
GLAHA 10154
W.R. Scott bequest, 1940

THE ENGRAVER INSCRIBED his plate with a name and a date. The date 1532 is significant as it appears on a number of prints by an anonymous master from the generation of engravers that followed Marcantonio. The Master of the Die's engravings are usually signed with a die and the letter B. The abbreviated name, also inscribed, indicates that this learned print was published by one of the most successful print-sellers in sixteenth-century Rome, Antonio Salamanca (1478–1562). Salamanca published many prints with subjects taken from Roman history and mythology, and his shop on the Campo de' Fiori is said to have been a place where erudite conversations took place surrounded by prints representing Roman subjects. This print is certainly evidence of how his thriving image business promoted knowledge of ancient art. The model for this Venus was most likely the Roman sculpture of a Nymph 'alla spina', now in the Uffizi, Florence (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, 61). The marble represents a young woman, raising her leg in order to remove a thorn from her heel. Earlier, in about 1516, Marcantonio had used the same sculptural source for his *Venus after her Bath* (8).

The engraving shows an episode from the story of Venus's love for the mortal Adonis, who is killed by a boar while hunting. The Roman poet Ovid, whose collection of love stories, the *Metamorphoses*, became a standard reference work in the Renaissance, tells how after she heard of her lover's death, the disconsolate Venus wandered barefoot through the woods and cut herself on a rose bush. Her blood fell onto a white rose, which metamorphosed into the red flower that has become a universal symbol of love, an emblem, in fact, of love's power to hurt as well as delight.

6

## Giovanni Jacopo Caraglio

(Verona *c.*1505–65 Krakow) after Rosso Fiorentino; (Florence 1494–1540 Fontainebleau)

*Venus, 1526*

engraving 21.2 x 11.0
B.XV.78.33
GLAHA 40023
Purchased, 1993, with support from the Art Fund and the National Fund for Acquisitions

After Raphael's death in 1520, the print publishing business, which he established through collaboration from about 1510 with Marcantonio, continued under management of an assistant known as Il Baviera. His nickname identifies him as a Bavarian and so he was probably one of many Germans who provided printing expertise in Rome where book printing presses were still a rarity. From this point onwards, senior artists from Raphael's studio such as Giulio Romano and Gianfrancesco Penni – as well as outsiders – played a more active role as designers of print imagery. The set of 20 prints of the Olympian gods, from which this Venus comes, became fashionable. They were best-sellers, in fact, and engraved from drawings that Baviera commissioned from the Florentine Mannerist, Rosso Fiorentino. Rosso's very lively designs are more mobile and less like sculpture than earlier prints of statues in niches by Marcantonio, and this animation is characteristic of the Mannerist trend in painting, in which Rosso was an influential figure. Venus, who according to myth was born from the sea, stands on a shell which seems to emerge from the niche; she appears to be coming forward as she wrings the salt water from her hair. Buyers of Caraglio's prints would have recognised in this image of the goddess's birth an archetypal image invented by the Greek painter Apelles. Apelles's celebrated lost work, his Aphrodite Anadyomene (which means rising up out of the water), was familiar to Renaissance readers from Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, which constitutes the principal ancient source for both Roman and Greek art.

7

## Marcantonio Raimondi

(Bologna *c.*1480–1527/34)

*Crouching Venus, c.1509*

engraving 22.1 x 14.2

B.XIV.325.313

GLAHA 10134

W.R. Scott bequest, 1940

Venus is here presented in a pose accurately modelled on a famous Hellenistic marble statue of *c.*250 B.C, sometimes attributed to the sculptor Doidalsas. Whereas the original marble is clearly a variant of the Praxitelean figure of Venus bathing, Marcantonio has shown the goddess crouching playfully against an invented pedestal in order to allow Cupid to climb on to her shoulders. This same striding Cupid can be seen, from a different angle, in Marcantonio's *Mars, Venus and Eros* (4) which, like this exceptionally beautiful print, is evidence of Marcantonio's originality as an artist, despite the unsubstantiated claim of the early print scholar Adam von Bartsch that this image must have been based on a design by Marcantonio's master, Francia. The body of drawings now accepted as by Marcantonio confirm what we know from his prints, that he was a talented draughtsman who studied ancient statues for himself long before moving to Rome and working with Raphael. Indeed, his excellence as a draughtsman and engraver was recorded as early as 1504 in a poem *Il Viridario* by the Bolognese humanist Giovanni Achillini (1466–1538), describing how Marcantonio '…imitated the beautiful armour of the ancients, in his drawings and with his exquisite burin work'.

Various marble versions of the Crouching Venus statue were available for study by artists in Rome in the early sixteenth century, including the one regarded as the best, which is that now in the Royal Collection and currently on loan to the British Museum (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, 18). It was probably this statue, with its head intact, that Marcantonio saw in Rome. By the 1560s, but possibly much earlier, the statue was in the ducal collections in Mantua, from where it was bought for King Charles I in 1625.

8

## Marcantonio Raimondi

(Bologna *c.*1480–1527/34) after Raphael (Urbino 1483–1520 Rome)

*Venus after her Bath, c.1516–20*

engraving 17.4 x 14.0
Bartsch XIV.224.297
GLAHA 10142
W.R. Scott bequest, 1940

According to myth, Venus was born from foam in the sea and so images of her bathing naked are central to her story. The most famous Roman statues of Venus, for example the 'Medici Venus', are in fact versions of a celebrated, lost work from the island of Cnidos, that was made by the Greek sculptor Praxiteles in the fourth century B.C. That much-imitated work showed Venus putting her dress aside as she went to bathe.

This is one of seven, doubtless commercially motivated, prints made by engravers in Raphael's circle which reproduce a series of small erotic pictures designed by Raphael in 1516 for a bathroom (*stufetta*) in the Vatican apartments of the pope's advisor, Cardinal Bibbiena. The life of Venus was the main subject of eight small panels that were surrounded by decorative painting and stucco work. The design of the whole room was modelled on ancient painted decoration found in the recently discovered ruins of Nero's Palace, the Domus Aurea. This image shows one of two frescoes which have not survived.

The figure of Venus is based on an ancient sculpture known as the Nymph 'alla spina' now in the Uffizi, Florence (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, 61) which, drawn from another angle, was the source for *Venus Wounded by the Thorns of a Rose* by the Master of the Die (5). Marcantonio has used the same pose but altered the action so that Venus is drying her foot. This engraving was clearly very popular and impressions were distributed rapidly throughout Europe. Five copies are known, as well as creative versions by contemporary German artists Albrecht Altdorfer and Hans Sebald Beham.

9

## Agostino Veneziano

(Agostino dei Musi) (Venice *c.*1490–*c.*1540 Rome)
After Raphael

*Venus and Eros, 1516*
Engraving 17.0 x 13.1
B.XIV.218.286
GLAHA 10138
W.R. Scott bequest, 1940

LIKE (8), THIS PRINT is based on one of 8 small frescoed panels designed by Raphael for the *stufetta* in the Vatican apartments of Cardinal Bibbiena. This print, uniquely, is dated in the year in which the frescoes were painted and indicates that the engravers in Raphael's circle rapidly exploited the commercial value of the workshop's newest imagery. It illustrates the text of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* X, 525–528, in which Cupid reaches to embrace his mother Venus and accidentally grazes her with one of his arrows. This caused her to fall in love with the mortal, Adonis.

The landscape in the background of the engraving derives from prints by Agostino's fellow Venetian printmaker Giulio Campagnola. The figure of Venus is adapted from a Roman marble sculpture, now in the Vatican, of Venus Seated, which, from the 1550s, was in the garden of Ippolito d'Este's villa on the Quirinal (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, 17).

10

## Here attributed to Jan Muller

(Amsterdam 1571–1628) after Hendrick Goltzius

*Venus and Cupid, c.1588–1600*

engraving 28.17 x 31.1

unrecorded, possibly unique, trial proof

GLAHA 7350

W.R. Scott bequest, 1940

This unfinished proof impression of an unrecorded print shows Venus and Cupid reclining in an embrace, their marble-textured faces touching, and their bodies isolated from the setting and background which is sketched in very lightly with drypoint. A few lines reveal, top right, the legs of another figure, probably Venus's husband, Vulcan. Lines also faintly indicate the richly-carved lion's-paw legs on which the bed rests.

Style and virtuoso burin technique, with impressively broad swelling lines and spectacular networks of curving parallel shading, places this unrecorded print close to the work of the mannerist painter and engraver, Hendrick Goltzius of Haarlem. Goltzius trained a group of engravers who modelled themselves on his flamboyant style, including Jacob Matham, Jacques de Gheyn II and Jan Muller. All four made stylish prints which reproduce works of art created for the court of the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II in Prague.

Proof impressions of prints by Jan Muller survive in large numbers, and he is distinctive in assembling albums of special, sometimes unique impressions of his own work. The open contours used here to render the flesh of both figures are also characteristic of signed works.

The paper has a watermark, the goddess Artemis bathing her feet in a brook, very similar to Briquet 7544, which is associated with paper made in Lorraine in the late 1580s, and so consistent with use by a printmaker in the low countries. The composition is closely related to an anonymous engraving, signed 'Henricus Goltzius inventor' and dated 1588, (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Mary Stansbury Ruiz Bequest M.88.91.334) which presents Venus and Cupid reclining on a bed in very similar poses. Both works show a debt to Correggio's *Venus and Cupid* (Paris, Louvre). In all three works a sculptural image underlies the pose of the reclining goddess, with one arm above her head. This is the famous marble of a sleeping nymph in the Belvedere in Rome (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, 79), also known as the Ariadne, and which was engraved by Marcantonio (B.XIV.162.199).

11

## Hendrik Goltzius

(Mülbracht 1558–1617 Haarlem)

*Venus, Bacchus and Ceres, 1595*
engraving 16.3 diameter
Hollstein 133
GLAHA 228
McCallum bequest, 1948

Through the development of a very distinctive, rather mannered engraving style, reflected in some large-scale pen works, Goltzius became an extremely successful printmaker. His work was in demand throughout Europe, not least with the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II in Prague, who owned the original engraved silver plate from which this exquisite work was printed. This beautiful, erotic, night piece dates from the late, classical phase of Goltzius's work, after his return from Italy, where he made a careful study of ancient statues for incorporation in his work. Anticipating by over a decade the nocturnes engraved in Rome by Hendrik Goudt after Elsheimer, it places a reclining Venus at the centre of the attention of the gods Ceres and Bacchus. Their gifts of food and wine, according to the maxim quoted from the Eunuch, a play by the ancient writer Terence, are necessary for Venus to retain her love-giving power (*sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus*; without Ceres and Bacchus Venus grows cold). The evocative light reflected from Venus's radiant skin comes from the flame stoked by her son, Cupid.

12

## Agostino Veneziano

(Venice *c.*1490–*c.*1540 Rome)

*The Academy of Baccio Bandinelli, 1531*

engraving 27.5 x 30.1
Bartsch XIV.314.418
GLAHA 6012
W.R. Scott bequest, 1940

THE ENGRAVER OF THIS remarkable scene of an early artists' academy was one of the first to join Marcantonio, in 1516, in Raphael's print publishing venture. After Raphael's death, print publishing continued, though there were major interruptions such as the Sack of Rome in 1527, when the city was plundered by Imperial troops. Marcantonio was certainly ruined by the events of 1527 and then either left Rome for Bologna, or was killed. In this later phase, Veneziano made prints for other artists, including the Florentine artist Baccio Bandinelli (1493–1560), who worked in Rome for two Medici popes, Leo X (1475–1521) and Clement VII (1523–34). Bandinelli's fame owes much to the prints he designed, especially those he commissioned in Rome in the late 1520s, which include one of Marcantonio's masterpieces, the *Martyrdom of St Lawrence* (B. XIV.89.104).

Thirty years before the Accademia del Disegno opened in Florence, Bandinelli was running a drawing academy in his rooms in the Belvedere of the Vatican in Rome. This is one of two prints, in addition to a drawing in the British Museum, that memorialise his pioneering institution. The lamplight reminds us that artists drew from sculptural models in the evenings, after a long day in the workshop. The light also casts shadows from the collection of casts on the platform behind which allows the engraver to make a learned allusion to Pliny's account of the origin of the art of drawing in tracing shadows (*Natural History*, XXXV, 5). Bandinelli is the richly clothed man, seated to the right of centre, holding a statuette of Venus. She is paired with a male figure standing on the table, possibly representing Apollo, the god of light. Bandinelli is lecturing about Venus, however, and we might deduce that the goddess's divine beauty, expressed in the idealised ancient statuette, was central to his teaching on aesthetics.

13

## Battista di Parma

(active Parma 1587)
after Stradanus (Jan van der Straet)
(Bruges 1523–1605 Florence)

*The Practitioners of the Fine Arts, 1587*

engraving 42.5 x 29.2
New Hollstein, 210, copy a, i/ii
GLAHA 6054
W.R. Scott bequest, 1940

This is an Italian copy of a highly popular engraving by a Dutch engraver who worked in Italy, Cornelis Cort (1533–78). Cort and Stradanus conceived the engraving as an allegory of the practice of the fine arts and it communicates some of the core values of the first official artists' academy, the Accademia del Disegno in Florence, which opened in 1563. Before this, teaching of art took place almost exclusively in artists' workshops, although there were short-lived academies such as that of Baccio Bandinelli (12). The print is based on a drawing, now in the British Museum, by a Flemish draughtsman Stradanus (Jan van der Straet), who made many designs for prints. Stradanus gave anatomical demonstrations at the Accademia in the winter of 1563–4.

The design is not a representation of the Accademia, rather it is an allegory, in which we see artists at various stages of their careers engaged in different branches of art. High up, masters, who are recognisable as such by their smart clothing, are engaged in the most elevated arts of STATVARIA and PICTVRA. At the bottom, boys can be seen learning the rudiments of figure drawing, which began with the study of anatomy. Almost as prominent as the flayed corpse and the skeleton, is a statue of Venus which can be seen on the table in the right foreground. The goddess is placed here both as a statue for students to draw once they had learnt the basics of anatomy, but also as an emblem of beauty which was essential to the learning process.

14

## Pier-Francesco Alberti

(Borgo San Sepolcro 1584–1638 Rome)

*The Painters' Academy*

engraving, *c.*1615

41.1 x 52.7

Bartsch XVII.313.1

GLAHA 52161

Purchased from Christopher Mendez, 1971

THE ROMAN ARTIST Pier-Francesco Alberti who made this print was connected with the Accademia di San Luca through his father Durante, who was its *Principe* in 1598, and it seems probable that this image represents the famous Rome Academy, founded in 1593 under Federico Zuccaro. Various aspects of the painter's art are represented by the different groups, each led by a master, who is recognisable by his beard or masters' hat. To the left, young boys are receiving their initiation to drawing the human figure by learning – one by one – the individual features of the human head; in the centre, an expert in geometry is demonstrating his art on the floor; behind him another expert is supervising the perspective elements of a painting against the wall. On a higher plane, a small selection of casts, on the shelf at the back, illustrate the importance of fragments of sculpture as a source of good design and as inspiration from the antique. The casts available included parts of the body and expressive heads but here, as in each of these images of an artist's academy (12, 13 and 14), a prominent place is occupied by a torso of the goddess of love, Venus, representing the ultimate female beauty.

15

## Nicolas Dorigny

(Paris 1658–1746) after Carlo Maratta (Camerano 1625–1713 Rome)

*An Academy, 1728*

engraving 40.7 x 32.0
Le Blanc 51
GLAHA 55249
Purchased from Elizabeth Harvey-Lee, 2007, with support from the National Fund for Acquisitions

THE FRENCH ENGRAVER Dorigny played an important role in the development of the arts in Britain. Born in Paris, he was the grandson of Simon Vouet and travelled to London in 1712 to engrave the greatest Renaissance works of art in Britain, Raphael's Tapestry Cartoons of the Acts of the Apostles. His prints of the cartoons and this engraving of an academy provided students of painting with valuable information about Italian artistic practice.

This engraving reproduces an allegorical drawing by the famous Roman painter Carlo Maratta, who was regarded as the last representative of the academic tradition that began with Raphael. The print draws attention to the subjects which Maratta emphasised as of importance to students at the Accademia di San Lucca, of which he was *Principe*. Maratta's original drawing, now at Chatsworth, was described by Jonathan Richardson in his *Essay on the Theory of Painting* (1725 edition, vii): 'Carlo Maratta, in a very Capital Drawing I have seen, (amongst many others) in the Collection of Mr. Davenant, has represented Painting; 'Tis, indeed, a sort of Treatise on the Art; There is Perspective, Geometry, and Anatomy.' Maratta's close knowledge of Raphael's painterly practice is evident from the phrase 'tanto che basti', meaning 'as much as necessary', which is inscribed in three places to emphasise the desirability of anatomy, perspective and geometry. This phrase was first used by Dante in his *Inferno*, and Raphael was, it seems, fond of quoting it (Golzio, 1971, 30–31).

Here, deliberately higher in the image than the studies regarded as preparatory, ancient statues play an important role as models for figures of ultimate beauty. Venus is central; the others are the 'Farnese Hercules' and Apollo playing the lyre. Above appears the motto 'Non Mai Abbastanza', encouraging the ceaseless study of ancient statues, not least Venus.

16

## William Hogarth

(London 1697–1764)

*Analysis of Beauty Plate I, 1752*
engraving 38.1 x 50.1
Paulson 195
GLAHA 16096
Acquired by exchange from Glasgow University Library, 1980

Hogarth's print imagery often depends on a dramatic contrast, and his treatise for artists, the *Analysis*, was accompanied by two engravings which frame in this way his attitudes to Art (Plate 1) and Nature (Plate 2). This apparently innocent contrast sums up an intense debate in eighteenth-century London about whether artists should represent what they saw (nature), or should follow Italian Renaissance practice and learn to recreate the idealised figures known from ancient art.

Plate 1 is concerned with didactic methods and with the attitudes of British society, which praised ancient art in an entirely uncritical way. The main scene is set in Hyde Park Corner, in the statuary's yard run by John Cheere (1709–87), an artist who churned out lead casts of ancient sculptures for the gardens of the nobility. The many famous statues include the 'Belvedere Torso', the 'Farnese Hercules', the Laocoön and the 'Belvedere Antinous'. The centrepiece, of course, is the figure of the 'Medici Venus', which by the end of the seventeenth century was the best known of all ancient statues. Hogarth expresses her overriding importance in the introduction to his *Analysis* (xvii), quoting Lomazzo, who describes her as 'the goddess of divine beauty, from whence all the beauty of inferior things is derived'.

17

## Marcantonio Raimondi

(Bologna *c.*1480–1527/34) after Raphael (Urbino 1483–1520 Rome)

*The Judgement of Paris, c.1517–20*

engraving 29.1 x 42.8
B.XIV.197.245
GLAHA 6745
W.R. Scott bequest, 1940

Raphael's scholarly interest in the art and architecture of ancient Rome was recognised by his appointment as papal curator of antiquities in 1516, at about the time that this print was made. His paintings and drawings are full of erudite references to ancient art and literature. This print by Marcantonio in collaboration with Raphael, which shows a mortal in an exchange with the goddess Venus, rapidly became one of the best-selling images of the Renaissance, spawning numerous copies and versions (18). From the moment it was made, artists turned to this print as a source of inspiration not just for the subject, but for images of the nude human figure. Its continuing influence can be traced centuries later in the work of Delacroix, Manet and others. The image is substantially based on one panel from a marble Roman sarcophagus of the second century A.D. in the Villa Medici, which was one of the best loved ancient works among the artists of Raphael's circle (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, 119).

The story, of which the Judgement forms part, is central to classical literature and culture. It was one of the causes of the Trojan War, a great and drawn-out battle from the distant past, which was a major theme in Greek literature. The tragic story reverberated also throughout Latin literature, most famously in Virgil's epic about the foundation of Rome, the *Aeneid,* which inspired several prints from Raphael's engravers. In this print we see the Trojan prince Paris, who was reputedly the most handsome man in the world, choosing between the naked charms of three goddesses Juno, Minerva and Venus. Empowered by his gift of the apple to Venus, Paris seduced Helen, wife of Menelaus, and thus precipitated the catastrophe of the Greek siege of Troy.

18

## Unknown Italian engraver after Marcantonio

*Venus, Cupid and Minerva from the Judgement of Paris, c.1520–30*
engraving 20.3 x 14.2
B.XIV.234.310
GLAHA 10147
W.R. Scott bequest, 1940

There has as yet been no account given in the art-historical literature of this small print, which copies a group of nude figures from the famous *Judgement of Paris* engraving by Marcantonio (17): the goddess Minerva, and Venus and Cupid. Its function was presumably to provide artists, who were by far the largest group of users of such engravings, with an example of a pair of nude goddesses, designed by a great artist, for study and use as compositional aid. Its existence provides, in addition to the many copies of the whole composition, evidence of the extraordinary success of that print and thus of Raphael's influence over successive generations of artists.

19

## Unknown Italian engraver after Titian

(Pieve di Cadore 1480/85–1576 Venice)

*Venus and Adonis, c.1573*

engraving 41.3 x 32.4

Lit: Michael Bury, The Age of Titian, National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh 2004, cat 140

GLAHA 7687

W.R. Scott bequest, 1940

This engraving of Venus's love for the mortal Adonis is closely based on the painting of 1553–4 in the Prado, which was one of six *Poesie* painted by Titian for King Phillip II of Spain. It shows one of the most famous episodes associated with Venus, her love affair with the beautiful young Adonis. Titian's figure of Venus, with one leg hanging down, as she embraces Adonis in her attempt to keep him from leaving, was taken from the figure of 'Psyche' in an ancient Roman relief. The original, now lost (known as 'il Letto di Policleto', Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, no 94) was owned by the sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti.

The unknown Venetian artist of this rare engraving made his print of one of Titian's greatest works more commercial by adding Latin verses which point the moral of the tale, as well as a superfluous scene in the background illustrating Adonis's death, gored by one of the boars he hunted, as Venus looks on from her chariot in the sky.

20

## Pieter van Sompel

(Antwerp *c.*1600–43 Haarlem) after Peter Paul Rubens (Siegen 1577–1640 Antwerp)

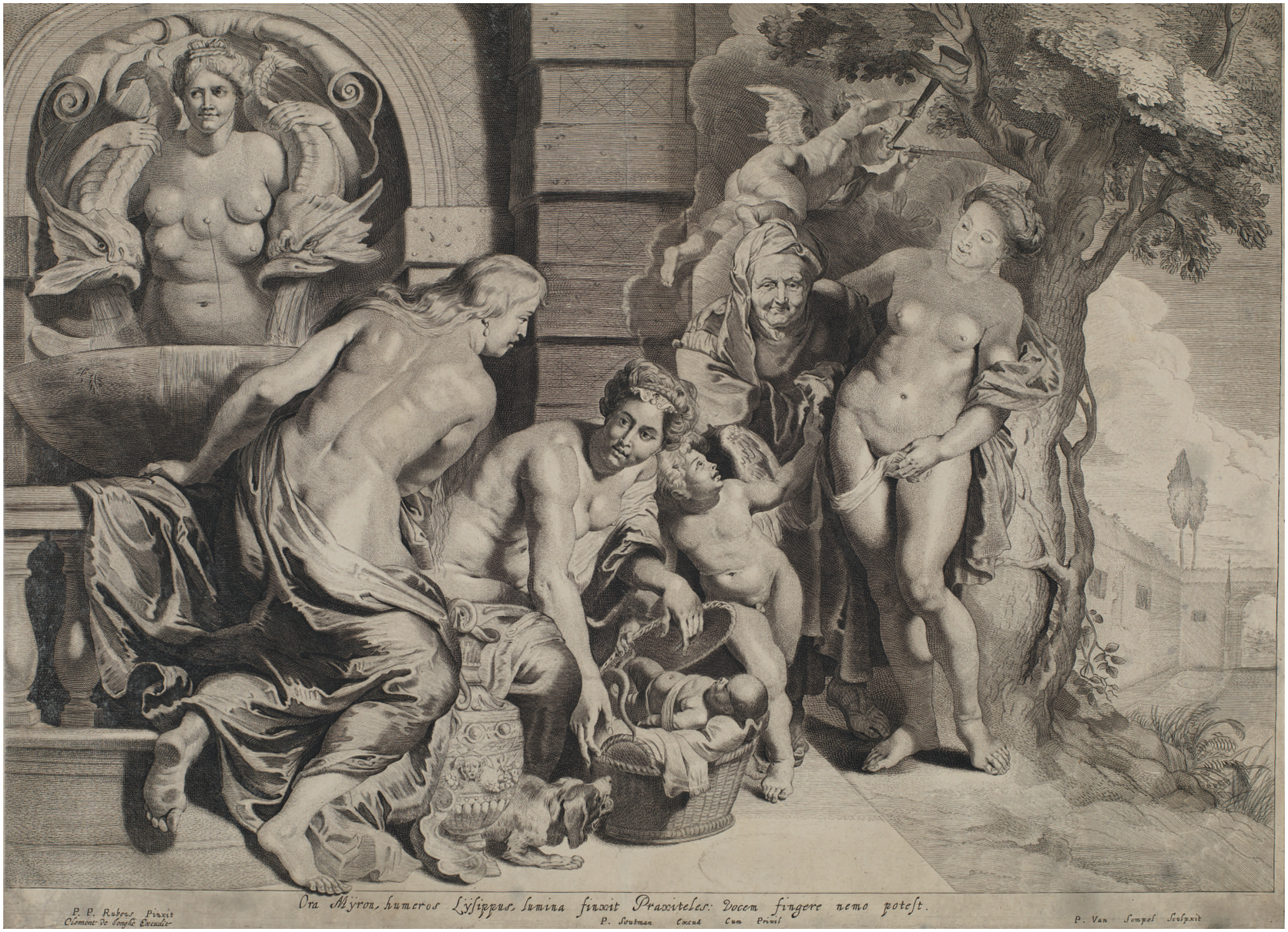
*Erichthonius in his Basket, c.1630*

engraving 35.2 x 48.8
Hollstein 3
GLAHA 9152
William Hunter bequest, 1783

RUBENS TREATED THIS obscure subject in an oil sketch in the Courtauld Gallery, London as well as a painting in the Liechtenstein collection, on which Van Sompel's engraving is based. Van Sompel's drawing is in the Teylers Museum, Haarlem, inv. no. O 030. The print is evidence that Rubens used the subject partly to explore the expressive forms of sculpture transmitted from ancient Greece. Interestingly, Erichthonius's birth was one of the erotic subjects treated by Raphael in 1516 for the frescoes in Cardinal Bibbiena's *stufetta* (8, 9, 22). Although Raphael's painting was destroyed, the erudite Rubens would probably have known of its existence.

The story of Erichthonius concerns one of the early mythical kings of Athens, which was a major centre of the arts. Erichthonius appears in the basket in which Athena entrusted him to the daughters of King Cecrops, and he was born as the result of the attempted rape of Athena by the blacksmith god Hephaestus. The girls are seen reacting in horror as they uncover the infant and discover that he has serpent's tails in place of legs.

Against the background of this strange tale, Rubens's print explores ideas about ancient sculpture. Prominent, top left, is a statue of Diana of Ephesus, of a type that was prized by artists as an image of Nature since, with her many breasts, she could nurture all things. Then, Rubens has constructed Cecrops's shapely daughters from the forms of famous statues, a refinement to which the inscription draws our attention. Alluding to Pliny the Elder, this tells us that Myron was famous for the faces of his figures, Lysippos produced the most elegant shoulders, and Praxiteles the finest eyes. (Nobody, Rubens adds, could make a statue speak.) The daughter to the far right is based on the form of the most famous statue of all in the ancient world, the Venus by Praxiteles on the island of Cnidos. This lost work is known from many marble versions, most famously the 'Medici Venus'.



21

## Agostino Veneziano

(Agostino dei Musi) (Venice *c.*1490–*c.*1540 Rome)

*Venus and Vulcan Surrounded by Cupids, 1530*

engraving
38.5 x 26.7
B.XIV.261.349
GLAHA 10132
W.R. Scott bequest, 1940

This print is by one of the engravers who joined Marcantonio to work in Raphael's print publishing business from about 1516. Two disasters occurred in the 1520s which might have put a stop to that enterprise. The first was the death of Raphael in 1520 and the second, in 1527, was the brutal sack of the city by Imperial soldiers which ended the careers (and lives) of many artists. Raphael's principal engraver, Marcantonio, was very likely one of the artists who died in those tragic events. In the 1530s, thanks to the activities of competing printsellers such as Antonio Salamanca (5), the market for prints expanded. Agostino Veneziano's inscription informs us, possibly reliably, that it follows a design by Raphael. The image is close, however, to a small panel from the circle of Raphael's pupil, Giulio Romano, in the Louvre (Inv. 424), so the engraver's claim to be reproducing a work by Raphael may be accurate, but equally it may reveal an attempt to take commercial advantage of the master's name.

The warm family scene takes place in front of the marriage bed of Venus and Vulcan, the blacksmith god. Vulcan was called upon by the gods when needed to make objects with magical powers, such as the arrows with which Cupid infects lovers. His mother, Venus, is attaching magical flights to ensure their accuracy before placing them into Cupid's quiver.

22

## Agostino Veneziano

(Agostino dei Musi) (Venice *c.*1490–*c.*1540 Rome) after Giulio Romano (1499–1546)

*Venus and Eros, c.1520*

engraving 24.1 x 17.1
Bartsch XIV.239.318
GLAHA 10151
W.R. Scott bequest, 1940

In ancient and renaissance poetry, landscape is often the evocative setting for a love story. Here Venus is reclining, and Cupid arouses her not by means of his bow and arrows, but by turning against her the torch which normally she uses to inflame desire in others.

The Viennese print cataloguer, Bartsch proposed one of Raphael's senior assistants, Giulio Romano, as the designer of this print, although there is no known related drawing from which to judge. In any case Veneziano's engraving does indeed reveal the erudition of an artist who made a study of classical archaeology. The figure of Venus, with one leg hanging down, is based on an ancient sculpture, the Amor and Psyche relief, the original of which is lost, but which was once in the collection of the sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, 94) and became well-known among artists. The same ancient relief was used by Titian as the source for his figure of the goddess in the *Venus and Adonis* painting, which is represented in this exhibition by an anonymous Venetian engraving (19). Possibly, Titian owned a copy of this print which he used as a reference for the ancient relief.

23

## Jacques Androuet Du Cerceau

(Paris *c.*1510–84 Annecy) after Rosso Fiorentino; (Florence 1494–1540 Fontainebleau)

*Venus and Mars Served by Nymphs and Cupid c.1542–8*

etching 21.4 x 17.4

Félix Herbet, Les Graveurs de l'Ecole de Fontainebleau, B. M. Israel, Amsterdam 1969, p. 159

GLAHA 53642

Purchased from Lutz Riester, 2001, with support from the National Fund for Acquisitions

This print by an artist who is better known for his architectural designs, is one of several that derive from a famous drawing of Mars and Venus by Rosso – now in the Louvre – which was commissioned by the Italian poet Pietro Aretino to celebrate the marriage in 1524 of King François I and Eleanor of Austria (sister of Emperor Charles V). This print, which reverses the image of the drawing, appears to have been made in Fontainebleau, where François established a community of artists, including engravers, in order to create for his court beauties such as those the king had admired in Italy.

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